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# The Australian WOMEN'S WEEKLY

DECEMBER 23, 1953

18 DEC 1953

NEW SOUTH WALES

Vol. 21, No. 30

## THE QUEEN IN NEW ZEALAND

THE excitement that New Zealanders will feel when Queen Elizabeth steps ashore in Auckland on December 23 will strike a responding chord in Australian hearts.

With Her Majesty only just across the Tasman and her arrival in Australia little more than a month away, the Royal tour, so long and eagerly awaited, is now a reality.

For both countries the first visit by a reigning monarch is a historic event.

Elizabeth II will meet the people of her Pacific dominions not only as Queen of the great British Commonwealth, but also specifically as Queen of New Zealand and the Queen of Australia.

But traditionally the monarch's strongest ties are with the United Kingdom and the young and lovely Elizabeth is no exception.

Although her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, is by her side, she is far from her home and her children.

Her tour, however much she is spared, will be an arduous one.

She will be living, in a Royal way, out of suitcases. This in itself gives a feeling of impermanence.

How can New Zealanders and Australians make the Queen feel at home?

They already have the answer in their affection for her.

Though their lands may be strange to her, not even the Old Country can boast more loyal and loving subjects.

## Our cover:

● The cover portrait of Her Majesty the Queen is a new one by Court photographer Baron. With the Royal tour of New Zealand as its inspiration, the surrounding decoration done by artist Keith Dalgleish is a representation of the facade of a Maori meeting house.

## This week:

● Our special Royal tour section, heralding the Queen's arrival in New Zealand, begins on page 9. On the opening page there is another Baron portrait of the Queen, this time taken with the Duke of Edinburgh in the Grand Entrance at Buckingham Palace. Other color pictures within the section are from Mr. B. M. McCoppin, of Kew, Victoria, the National Publicity Studios, Auckland, New Zealand, and Tasman Empire Airways Ltd.

## Next week:

● Our free lift-out novel next week is the highly entertaining and original story, "The Angel Who Pawned Her Harp," by television writer Charles Terrot. In this novel Terrot has achieved something quite new. Ignoring the rules, he has combined fantasy and realism with astonishing success. Is the girl with the smile "as beautiful as a rainbow" an angel or is she a charlatan? Would a real angel want to pawn her harp in Mr. Webster's secondhand store? And what would an angel be doing on earth, anyway? Real or not, the girl has an extraordinary effect on the lives of the people she meets. This is a book that will keep readers delighted to the last page.

Included in the free novel supplement will be a long short story, "Wayward Heart," by popular best-selling romantic author Faith Baldwin. It is the story of a girl whose ruthless ambition is to be "Somebody" with a capital S. Faith Baldwin, with her deep understanding of the feminine heart, shrewdly shows how easily a woman can miss the path to true happiness by pursuing material success.

## Arresting tale of American turned bullfighter

Book review by AINSIE BAKER

"BULLFIGHTER FROM BROOKLYN," the autobiography of Sidney Franklin, is an arresting book, but no more arresting than the story of the youth from Brooklyn who came to be one of the great figures of the world's bullfights.

It all began in 1922, when young Sidney ran away from home and went to Mexico to work as a signwriter. One night he got into an argument discussing bullfighting with Mexican friends.

The outcome was that he was asked to prove his boast that not only was an American capable of becoming a bullfighter but one who if he wanted to could outshine the great Spanish and Mexican stars of this traditional sport.

Brash young Franklin's first attempt ended in humiliation and ridicule, when he was thrown 15 feet into the air by a half-grown bull calf.

What nobody knew was that when he walked away from the jeers and the laughter his feet were already set on the path that was to lead him to fame, fortune, and the tumultuous ovations of the bullfight crowds.

But before his life was to become a series of triumphant processions from city to city (complete with personal retinue, hangers-on, and enamored ladies), the bumptious American was to be victimised by snide promoters, doped, and once accused of having the evil eye.

Interwoven with the author's own fantastic story are some interesting explanations of the elaborate tradition surrounding bullfighting.

The real fighter bull, Franklin says, doesn't know the meaning of fear. His breeding gives him only one emotion—the desire to destroy anything that moves or makes a sound.

Contrary to popular belief, the author says, all cattle are color blind. Red means no more to them than any other color. The bull in the ring doesn't know the difference between the bullfighter and the cape, but thinks they are one.

It is for that reason that the bullfighter when threatened mustn't follow the natural instinct of drawing the cape to him for protection, but must remain perfectly still, and without a moment's hesitation move the cape away from his body.

The supreme test of a bullfighter's skill comes when he is able thus to stand his ground before a charging bull, and with the cape draw the bull past him, so close that its horns actually tear the gold embroidery of his costume.

Ernest Hemingway, friend and fellow rooster of Franklin since their shared Spain's Civil War days, concludes the book with "An Appreciation of Sidney Franklin."

"Franklin is brave, with a cold, serene, and intelligent valor ... He is a better, more scientific, more intelligent, and more finished matador than all but about six of the full matadors in Spain today ..."

Hemingway writes. However, for a real appreciation of Sidney Franklin, turn to the author himself.

Our copy from Angus and Robertson, Sydney.

ment on page 23 Prestige Limited have illustrated their goodwill message with an Arthur Boothroyd original, depicting a Biblical scene entitled "Adoration," and offer free, art reproductions on linen grained paper, suitable for framing, to those who would like a personal copy of this work of art. Through the closing down of Prestige Limited over Christmas for the annual holidays of all employees, these reproductions will be posted when work is resumed on 11th January, 1954.

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# Come, My Beloved

Instalment three of  
an eight-part serial

By PEARL BUCK

APPALLED by the poverty and superstition he sees during a trip to India, American industrialist DAVID MacARD determines on his return home to establish as a memorial to his dead wife, LEILA, a missionary school to eradicate these conditions. He instructs his minister, DR. BARTON, to select young men suitable for training, then proceeds to select a site for the training school.

His son DAVID, inspecting a proposed site, meets OLIVIA DESSARD and urges his father to buy for his school the big old home that she and her mother are forced to sell.

Later when David visits the Dessard home with DARYA, his young Indian friend on a visit to America, Darya, greatly impressed by Olivia, tells David he should marry her. David amazes himself by declaring that he intends to do so. NOW READ ON:

THAT night when he and Darya reached home David continued in a daze, a mood vague and immense. He had been almost silent when Olivia came downstairs, he had not listened to the renewed and ardent talk of Darya, who devoted himself to the beautiful girl. He had talked desultorily with Mrs. Dessard, listening to her complaints of moving and storage and he had not heard anything that Darya said all the way home.

The golden stream of enthusiastic words went on and on, Darya unceasing in his praise of the wonderful girl, her grace, the pride of her noble head, her long, thin hands, the strength in her, the incomparable latent power.

"It will take courage to be her husband, you understand," he said ardently, "but a task how enticing! You must be strong, too, David, you must find a source of power for yourself."

"Well," MacArd said at the dinner-table, "how are the buildings getting on?"

The two young men looked at each other, stricken, and Darya began to laugh.

David flushed scarlet. "Father, we forgot to look at them."

"Forgot to look at them!" MacArd echoed, astounded. "Yes—we got to talking with—"

"With Olivia," Darya said.

"Miss Dessard," David said under his breath.

MacArd stared at them from under heavy brows.

"Well," he said, "well, well, well!"

David did not explain, and Darya hastened to protect him.

"The setting, Mr. MacArd, is divine in itself, a place inevitably to turn the thoughts of men to the Infinity, a site for the soul—"

"That is what it is for," MacArd agreed, "I am glad you understand my idea."

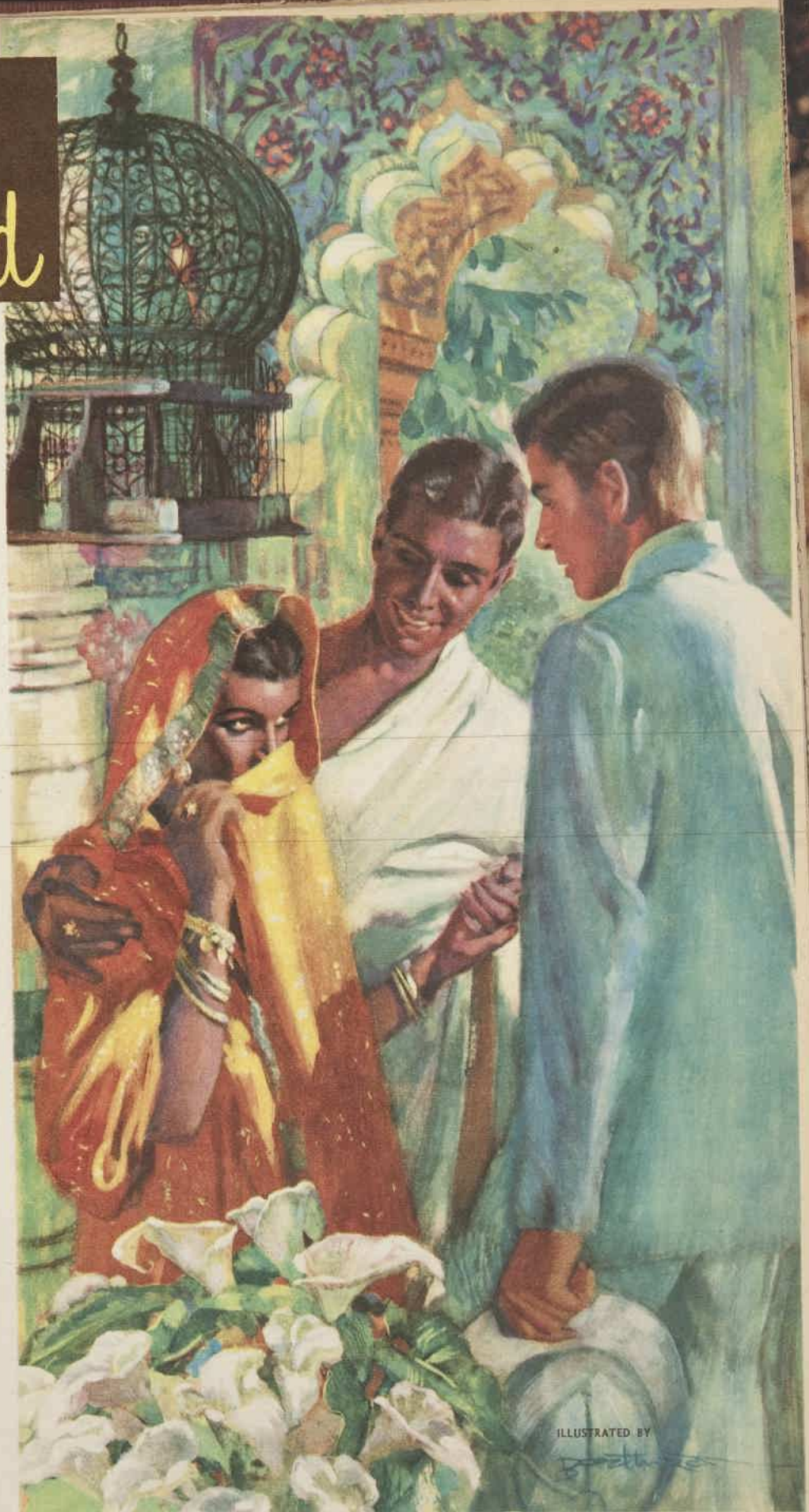
Darya's instinct told him that it was time for him to leave David and continue his westward way. He had curiosity to see some of the sights of America, he wished also to see the black people of the South, and he planned to sail from California.

No more was said about Olivia for he divined that David did not wish to talk about her and this reserve settled like a fog over their whole relationship.

"My friend, I must return to India," Darya said one morning. "It has been weeks since I came, how many I have forgotten, the year is passing and there is much I wish to do. My father asked me to be home

To page 41

"Another day she will speak to you," Darya said with an indulgent smile as Leilamani, raising her head, gave David a shy, lovely look.



ILLUSTRATED BY

B. Buck



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##### SAVOURY TOMATO:

1 cup sliced onion, 2 tbsps. dripping, 1 cup Oak Powdered Milk, 2 tbsps. flour, 2 cups cooked tomatoes and juice, salt and pepper.

Method: Cook onion in fat until very tender. Mix milk powder and flour thoroughly; add tomatoes (chopped or sieved, if desired) gradually stirring until smooth. Add to cooked onion and cook over low heat or boiling water until mixture thickens, stirring constantly. Season with salt and pepper. Add water if thinner mixture desired. Serves six.

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# Office Party

A short story by **NARD JONES**

THE buzzer on Sanford Bain's desk sounded an imperative summons. Bain glanced at the instrument with impatience and finally stretched out a languid hand to answer it.

It was Nora, his secretary, asking if she could come in and go over the list for Christmas cards.

Christmas cards! Well, he supposed he would have to get at it. The too tardy dawning of Christmas in his mind suddenly disturbed him. He knew this was no mere procrastination—it was something more than the symbol of the frantic male who has put off shopping.

He shrugged, mentally preparing a shopping list—something too expensive, he supposed, for Julia, his wife. With a start he realised he could not remember just when it was he had stopped buying dozens of silly cheap things to wrap elaborately for the tree; or when Julia no longer shopped with wily humor to bring that extra gift in which love underlaid the fun poked at some male foible of his.

He was suddenly aware that he had been rejecting a wholehearted acceptance of Christmas.

He sighed heavily—it was almost an angry guttural—and swung around in his swivel chair. He'd ask Nora to get the usual Scotch or cigars for old customers, he'd go over the card list, he'd do his annual Christmas letter . . .

But why hadn't Nora reminded him of the Christmas letter before this; usually she mentioned it about the tenth or thereabouts and here it was . . .

"You haven't been in the mood for it," Nora said when she came in. She was smiling, but without humor, a tall, handsome girl in dark skirt and businesslike blouse. She had started with him as a young woman of twenty-four and was now—he realised it suddenly—a woman in her thirties.

Bain thought he understood their relationship, and so did Nora Crawford, but it is unlikely that either was accurate about the understanding.

The relationship was at once rugged and delicate, almost perfect in its meshing and timing. It was certainly far from the fictionalised and motion-picture relationship. And although Bain and Nora might be said to be attracted to each other, the relationship had never approached, by the slightest inference, a tie that exceeded the boundaries of the office.

"If I'm not in the mood," Bain answered her, trying to hide the fact that her remark nettled him, "suppose you write the letter for me?"

Nora shook her head. "It ought to be from you, Mr. Bain. I'll get some cards if you like. Same list as last year?"

"I suppose so."

She seemed to hesitate. Then: "Mr. Bain, there's a Christmas party Thursday afternoon you should go to."

"Nora, you know how I feel about those things. Why should I? Who's giving it?"

"I really mustn't tell you that," she said. "But please take my word for it,

you ought to be there. For a little while, anyhow. The Cork Room at Gravely House. Two o'clock."

"But—"

He subsided because Nora had gently closed the door from the outside. It wasn't like Nora to be secretive with him, but so many queer things had happened in the past year that . . . he was reminded suddenly of his visit to the psychiatrist six months ago. He had found himself given to sudden flare-ups of temper—hot, quick flashes in his chest followed by angry words.

And, because his growing mood had seemed to be almost physical, he had gone to see John Martin, the old trusted family doctor.

"Can't find anything wrong with you, Sanford," Martin told him. "Everything all right with you and Julia?"

"I suppose so. We've been upset a little, maybe, by Kim's sudden marriage and going into the Army and all, but—"

"Of course," Martin waved his stethoscope airily. "Those things. They have to come, Sandy. Doubtless you and Julia are simply in a stretch of doldrums on the sea of matrimony. Which happens. Things going along all right at the office?"

"Of course." But there was a slight testiness and Bain pulled the knot of his tie unnecessarily tight. Martin noticed the signs and decided to plunge. "Ever think of trying a psychiatrist, Sandy?"

Bain glared at him and said, "Nuts!"

"I know. But sometimes it isn't a bad idea to have a go at one, especially when a fellow is beginning to look inward on himself a little."

"What do you mean?" Bain's reply was challenging, and Martin nodded with a compromising smile. "That's what I mean. You're too quick on the trigger. Defensive. Sensitive."

"Hang it, John, if you can't find anything physically wrong, then it's just that—well, there just seems to be no salt in my life any more. It makes a fellow mad."

"You bet it does," Martin agreed. "I guess every right thinking human being is angry underneath, Sandy. Because he feels cheated of a smooth and normal life, because his children seem in danger of their future, and because so much power is invested in evil."

In the end, and subtly, Martin convinced him about the psychiatrist. And at the second visit the specialist told Bain there was nothing he could do.

"You don't quite trust me," he told his patient. "I wish I could help you—but perhaps I should ask you to think honestly whether you are now quite trusting anybody. Cynicism is a progressive disease, Mr. Bain."

The words came back to him now with his shock of forgetting Christmas, and the recollection was not pleasant. Bain liked results; but the visits to the doctors had been—frustrating, fruitless.

As he was sure she would, Nora reminded Bain about the Christmas party on Thursday. He was still puzzled by her secretiveness—she surely could not have



fallen in with some coy office plot. The party, he had decided, must really be important.

So shortly after two he presented himself on the fourteenth floor of the Gravely House to encounter Joseph, the head waiter, hovering near the elevators. His dark eyes lighted in Christmas greeting—but not in recognition, Bain noticed, for Joseph's "Merry Christmas, sir!" had a tiny question mark at the end.

Then Bain's involuntary surprise warned him. "Oh, it's Mr. Bain himself! I beg your pardon. The lights in this hall, sir. You are looking for your party—it's right here in the Cork Room, sir."

He didn't recognise me at all at first, Bain thought, shocked to think that his inner change could have changed him so outwardly. For Joseph had a memory for faces, and the lights in the hallway were quite good enough.

He affixed a bright artificial smile as he entered the Cork Room suite to have his ears assailed with a merry buzzing of talk and cheer.

Tinsel stretched in silver glitter from the chandeliers to the corners of the room. The punch and liquors table was festive with greens, and there was a creditable looking Santa Claus hovering around.

Then Bain's face clouded. There was Sam Hennafoad! Well, he would have to be avoided—after the really classic dressing down Bain had given him following the Bixby deal.

Bain's eyes flickered to the man facing Hennafoad. Yes, it was—what the deuce was his name?—Magee. K. L. Magee, that insurance man who had presumed to question a claim Bain had made.

True, the instance wasn't quite covered in the policy, as the facts turned out; but Bain had had a go at the district manager about Magee's attitude. Later he heard Magee was with another company.

So . . . this wasn't just an office party; it wasn't a customers' party. He was about to say the devil take it when he glimpsed Nora Crawford standing by a window across the room. And his irritated confusion grew as he saw she was engaged in obviously gay chatter with Professor Nils.

Yes, sir, Nils—that crackpot prof who had almost had Kim sent down in his last year at the university for some disrespect during a lecture. Well, Bain had taken care of that, all right, he reflected now. He'd arranged that Nils make a public apology in the chapel for his effrontery. At that moment Nora glanced towards



**He realised now he had forgotten that the spirit of Christmas should not be just for one day but for all the days of all the years.**



*Julia came up to Nora and her husband, "Forgive me, darling," she said, "for not welcoming you to your own party."*

the door and gave him a wide smile and an airy wave of her hand which he did not return. But he intended to find out what this party was all about with its mixed characters.

As he started across the room he was jostled by a small stocky figure in a very bright blue suit. "Hello, there, boss, I'll give you a Christmas shoeshine?" Bain looked into the rugged features of the shoe-shine man who had permission to go to the various offices in the building to shine shoes.

It surprised him to see the face smiling, for he distinctly remembered a stupid altercation with the man involving, of all things, world politics! He had practically thrown him out of his office and told him never to solicit shines there again.

"Very nice of you to invite me," the little man said. "Now if it's okay I will come in day after Boxing Day and give you my gift—extra special after-Christmas shine!"

Nice I should invite, Bain thought dully; then he recalled that Joseph had certainly said he was looking for his party. "Okay," he said aloud, absently gripping the outstretched hand. "Merry Christmas to you, Tom."

He had believed he was detouring around Hennaforth and Magee, but suddenly they were confronting him with twin smiles of Christmas.

"How nice of you, Bain," Hennaforth said. "Merry Christmas to you, and if you don't mind I'd like to come over next week and discuss that Bixby thing again, sanely."

"It is nice," Magee put in. "I was just saying to Mr. Hennaforth that last time I heard, you didn't have me very far front in your book. But it did my heart good when I opened up that invitation. Couldn't believe it, at first . . ."

Bain grasped their hands and muttered season's greetings before he plunged on towards Nora. Nils was

smiling tentatively, then, as he saw Bain's grim expression, drifted away.

"Nora, what's the idea here, anyhow? Who is giving this party and where did the invitation list come from?"

Nora looked at him, her smile growing faintly bleak. "Your wife is giving the party, Mr. Bain, for you. And the invitation list she got from me—for the love of God."

She said this last very quietly, and Bain's jaw dropped. Then slowly his eyes surveyed the crowded room. Each guest his glance encountered was, surely enough, someone with whom he'd had a serious quarrel during the past year or had been patently unfair with in some unaccountable way. Nora would know who they were, he told himself in wonder. But Julia—how would Julia know they existed?

"She asked for the people you liked and—got along with before you seemed to change," Nora said as if reading his thoughts.

Bain saw that this was true. He glimpsed the balding head of Moffett, the bank vice-president who'd

suggested there ought to be increased interest on a loan; the bright round face of Ledbetter, the advertising agency man who'd lost the firm's account through a bad row with Bain in midyear. Through an open doorway he saw the unmistakably broad back of a classmate—their last meeting had been an unpleasant one in the locker room of the club.

"Nora . . ." Bain turned again to her. "I don't get this. I—"

She made an odd little gesture with a clenched fist. "I was afraid maybe you wouldn't. I told Mrs. Bain she shouldn't be disappointed if you didn't, that after Christmas I was going to turn in my notice because—you'd changed so much."

To his amazement, a flood of tears came then, and he turned to shield her from the room's view and gently pushed her face to his shoulder.

"There . . ." he muttered awkwardly, thinking how once he had to do this for Julia, every month or so, when they were young and things

*To page 44*





# Serenade your lady

A gay romance by JAY KANE

Now on this evening I had left my office earlier than Emilio, therefore I was first to see Pachuca.

I had arrived at Fonolla's house, and being alone upon the street climbed up the old stone wall, and was just reaching out my hand to the nearest tree when a gentle scream from below almost toppled me from my precarious perch.

She was there beneath the tree looking up at me, a pert-faced, tilted-nosed, kittenish creature, so tiny I could almost have fitted her in my pocket, with the hugest brown innocent eyes, and cherry lips that seemed to invite a kiss. In years she couldn't have been more than sixteen or seventeen.

Just one look at her and I felt my heart turn over in a somersault. Caught as I was caught it was hard to be dignified, but it didn't seem to matter much and I summoned up my most charming smile and gave her a courteous "Buenas tardes."

By every right I should then have backed down the wall and proceeded on my way, but as I began to do so I thought—though surely, surely I was mistaken, for what maiden would so outrage her modesty?—but, well, I thought that one of those dark eyes closed in a wink at me. Most likely it was but a trick of the shadows in the fading light, but I leaned so far over the wall to make sure of it that I fell head first into Fonolla's garden.

Pachuca was on her knees beside me, gently sponging a bruise on my forehead. I thought "This must be Heaven" and closed my eyes again. She kept on sponging and presently I dared to take another peep.

She looked so sympathetic, so anxious, and so completely adorable that I stopped pretending I was hurt and clasped her hand in both of mine, passionately proclaiming my undying love for her.

Looking back on it, I blush to think of the strange way in which Pachuca must have been brought up. Instead of reclaiming her hand and drawing away, she rolled her great dark eyes at me, and as best I can remember it said:

"Senor Vegas" (wherever had she learned my name?), "the man who wins me must woo me with song. My window is the second from the right. Tonight?"

Before I could speak a word in answer a step sounded on the path and Pachuca threw up her little brown hands in horror. "Aunt Concepcion! For the love of God! Hasta la noche, senor." And away she fled across the garden.

Never before had any pert Juliet invited me to play Romeo beneath her window, and when one is young and Juliet is pretty the role is bound to be an enjoyable one. There was only one little flaw which could mar my performance.

Now Senorita Montserrat has a nephew called Pepito, and Pepito has a pet bullfrog which he calls Leonidas. Many an evening has Leonidas passed serenading beneath my window, and his nerve-shattering caco-

two inevitably lead to another, I also thought about Pachuca.

Emilio, Juan, and I used to room together in the lodging-house of Senorita Montserrat Ganet Sierra on Capdevila in the neighboring town of Gimeno.

Juan was a poet, mad, careless, and irresponsible. He sang at nights in Espartero's cafe, making as much money in a night as Emilio or I made in a week, and spending as much in a week as Emilio and I together spent in a month.

He could sing a love song quite heartrendingly and, since he was young and also handsome, the women wept and threw him kisses and roses, which Juan thought very fine and touching, and the men shouted and threw him coins, which Juan thought even finer.

There was always a girl. He had a limitless capacity for loving and I never knew him out of love for more than two or three days together.

By comparison with Juan, Emilio and I were commonplace. We were just as young, but we were not so handsome and we could not sing. The ladies threw us neither kisses nor roses, and no men stamped their feet and shouted "Bravo" to us in the cafes. We worked in cramped little offices, and envied Juan his days of freedom.

But life was new, the days soon passed, and the nights were all our own. Nights of life, of love, of starlit skies and soft music. We drank, we danced, we dined together in perfect Arcadian bliss and brotherhood, and yesterday was a lifetime behind us, and tomorrow an eternity ahead.

Halcyon days, those. Weeks, months flew by on golden wings, and so I come to the day when we first met Pachuca.

In the neighborhood of Capdevila there are some fine old houses, and one of the finest was owned by an old miser called Fonolla, who had made his money out of export beef.

At the back of Fonolla's house was a stone-walled garden, containing some delectable fruit trees. The wall was high, but the stones were old, and since Senorita Montserrat was not liberal with the fruit upon her dining-table her lodgers were wont to supplement their needs from the trees in Fonolla's garden.

Eventually, as was bound to happen some day, the old skinflint died, and the house passed into the hands of some remote relatives, who came from nobody-knew-where to take possession.

**T**HE other week, in San Elias, as I was strolling along the street to my hotel, whom should I see but my old friend Emilio Azanga! And, by all the Saints, who should be with him but that incomparable scoundrel Juan Masanes!

Now many summers have passed since I last set foot in my native country and I returned prepared for a thousand odd changes, but the sight of those two arm in arm was so much more than I had bargained for that, as the saying goes, you could have knocked me over with a feather.

For eleven long years I had hated Juan with all the hatred that we of Latin blood can feel, and in all that time I never once thought but that Emilio scorned and shunned him alike. In exile I had found a fraction of consolation in my mind's picture of Juan, despised and ostracised by his oldest friends.

And here they were, like two brothers, walking and talking together with all the affability and good-fellowship in the world. Unhappy Juan! Solitary Juan! Bah! I could have spat.

They were coming towards me down the street, and I was not prepared to meet them. A convenient doorway hid me until they passed, and, since on the other hand nor was I prepared to lose them completely, I followed at a safe distance and saw them turn in at a hotel on Paseo San Juan. I had received a shock. I needed time to recover from it and think things over.

Once I had held great respect for Emilio's judgment. That was a point to remember. His reasoning had usually been sound, he had been fairly sober and never too rash; yes, I was bound to admit it, he had been more sober and less rash than I.

I lay on my bed looking at the innumerable little cherubs kicking up their heels on the frescoed ceiling, and I thought about Emilio, and about Juan, and, since thoughts of these

phony has driven me in desperation from the house.

And yet I should not have been so impatient with Leonidas, for some unkind fate had fashioned my vocal cords in such a manner that instead of a melodious *do re mi fa* I could produce sounds which resembled nothing more than Leonidas' discordant croaking.

How fortunate I was to have a friend such as Juan! He was such a good fellow he was sure to help me out. Always ready to lend a hand when needed. Oh, yes, one could certainly rely on Juan for that.

Dear old Juan had dined early and was dressing for his appearance at the cafe. No, he had no plans for later that night and would be delighted to put himself at my service.

Who was she? What was her name? Pachuca de Zaldo—oh, the people down the road in old Fonolla's house! No, he had not seen them, but the girl had





# When it comes to a delicate matter of love a young man should always sing his own songs beneath the window of his adored one

better be pretty, or he wouldn't lend his aid again to the courting.

We were still discussing her when Emilio swooped down upon us and gathered us into an effusive embrace.

"What's the happy news, brother?" asked Juan, as soon as he could get his neck free. "Have you fallen in love again?"

"Fallen in love! Holy Mother, you should see her eyes, and her lips, and her little hands and little feet! She's beautiful, Juan, even more beautiful than that actress at Ribo's last month. And she wants me to serenade her tomorrow night! You won't fail me, Juanita? I told her I could sing like—"

"Emilio!" I shouted across the room, awful suspicion dawning on me. "Who is she? Not Pachuca—it can't be Pachuca de Zaldo?"

"Oh, but yes," Emilio wheeled around in surprise. "You know her too?" A jealous gleam began to creep into the corner of his eye.

"I met her this evening under Fonolla's fruit trees. I climbed the old wall in the usual spot, and there she was. And such a surprise she gave me that I fell over the wall at her feet."

"How very odd!" said Emilio. "That's

just how it happened with me. Though in my case it wasn't surprise that made me fall. The truth is, I fancied she gave me a little encouragement, and in my eagerness to make sure of it I quite overbalanced and fell over the wall."

"She is well practised, this one, in bringing men to her feet," remarked Juan. Very properly I ignored him, and turned to Emilio.

"I think you should know," I carefully told my friend, "that tonight it is I who serenade her, with the assistance of Juan."

The jealous gleam flickered in Emilio's eyes, wavered, and slid out before it had got comfortably established. He shrugged his shoulders philosophically.

"Don't let us quarrel about it. It would be foolish to lose a friend in attempting to gain a wife, and perhaps finish up with neither. So tonight the field is all yours, tomorrow, it is mine, the next night yours, and so on until she chooses one of us. Good luck, my friend," He held out his hand.

"Good luck, Emilio." We clasped hands and embraced each other, and so sealed the agreement.

Later that night the stars smiling down over Fonolla's house saw me arranging my stance beneath Pachuca's balcony. Juan failed to find, since he had obligingly hidden himself and his guitar where Pachuca could not observe him.

Juan began to play, and presently sang with his melodious tenor. He sang with

restraint, of all windows in the street to that little window alone, and what one could resist the pathos of his plaintive appeal and remain closed?

It took about fifteen minutes for Pachuca to appear on the balcony. The serenade faltered, and Juan's audible appreciation sounded loudly in my ears. Oh, so beautiful she looked by moonlight! And so far up, that balcony! I could not even reach to take from her hand the rose she passed me down, but I caught it as it fell and pressed it to my lips.

I wore it in my coat next day, and while it remained there I could not escape Pachuca. And when Emilio left that night with Juan to serenade her, I almost hated both my friends.

Day by day Emilio and I compared our progress, but she seemed not to favor one of us any more than the other. She threw us blossoms, she dropped us kisses, she spoke us kind words, but always she evaded giving us any direct answer when we begged her to marry us.

One night when it was Emilio's turn to serenade I felt so disconsolate that I went down to Ribo's, and quite by accident met one of Juan's old flames, Amalia. She was a dancer by profession and a gay little flirt who had cultivated to a fine degree the art of entertaining her companions and making them forget their worries.

She made me forget mine to such an extent that I arrived home with the daylight, very light in the purse, even lighter in the head, and with Amalia draped over one arm.

When Emilio and Juan awakened shortly afterwards she was still there, and with many a "tch, tch" they smuggled her out of the

house before Senorita Montserrat should discover she had been smuggled into it.

I wondered what Amalia had recommended me to drink last night. From the taste to my palate this morning it must have been the very dregs of wine.

I couldn't add up figures with a mouth tasting like this, and with a head which performed such ceaseless gyrations, so, hoping the office could carry on without me, once more composed myself to slumber.

My chaste landlady gave me a black look when I finally ambled downstairs and asked her where I could find Juan. He was not in the house, and she presumed he had gone to visit his lady friend, Senora de Kilpatrick.

Senora Maria Urbano de Kilpatrick was at this time a stout and placid creature somewhere past forty. She was wedded quite early and reared a litter of squalling brats to gladden the eyes and heart of her adoring husband, when having reached the age of thirty-five or so she received an unexpected windfall, in the form of a well-established and flourishing wine-saloon, two mules and a cow.

Somewhere around the same time she so far forgot herself as to fall in love with a flowery-phrased Irishman, and her husband obligingly falling, or jumping—it was never proved which—in front of an express train she married her Irishman, who, drinking himself to death in less than twelve months, left her possessor of the wine-saloon, two mules, the cow, and an Irish name.

Regardless of her twenty years seniority, Juan had for quite a time been see-sawing with the idea of inviting her to try a third fling at matrimony. For who other among his female acquaintances could boast a wine-saloon and regular, assured income?

Juan, then, having gone to call on his Maria, where should I go but to visit Pachuca?

Having no particular wish to have my visit undergo the censorship of the formidable Aunt Concepcion, I avoided the front entrance and headed for the old stone wall at the rear.

Oh, what fortune! Pachuca was there beneath the fruit trees and at my call came running across the garden to me. She was full of wonderment at my presence there during the afternoon, and all solicitude when I told her I was not feeling well.

Seeing her so tenderly disposed towards me, it seemed a good time to press my suit, but at the mention of matrimony her brows wrinkled into a frown and she pushed out her under lip at me.

"Give me time, Angel," she pouted. "I have not yet made up my mind between you and Senor Azanga. You both sing so well, I really cannot tell the difference. But next week I promise to give you my answer."

I felt that Juan held my future happiness or heartache in his hands. Could he not, I suggested, sing just a little sweeter, a little more tenderly for me than he did for Emilio? Perhaps I could make it worth his while to do me this favor? It was just a thought, of course. No need to tell Emilio about it.

Juan would be delighted to do what he could for me. "Between you and me, I've always leaned a little your way, Angel," he told me. "And if you feel it's worth anything to you, well, the truth is I'm flat, so I won't say no to anything you think you can manage. Naturally we don't want poor old Emilio to hear of it."

Juan's compliance in this little plot gave me fresh hope. Poor Emilio! I almost pitied him. What chance had he now, with Juan pledged to my support?

After leaving Pachuca that night we had gone about thirty yards when Juan suddenly stopped.

"I'll have to leave you now, Angel. I've some serenading to do on my own account. Hasta manana." And away he went.

The week slowly passed. Emilio and I discussed our hopes together, but Pachuca's favors seemed to be divided equally between us. And every night after he had played

Juan hid himself and his guitar under the tree while the lovely Pachuca leaned from her balcony.

Illustrated by  
DUNLOP

To page 36



# Love and Christabel

A short story complete on this page

BY ARTHUR GORDON

**I**H, what a girl was Christabel the summer she was nineteen! She had red hair and smoky green eyes that slanted a bit and a bathing-suit that on anyone else might have led to a riot.

She had no major vices, but her hobby was twisting masculine hearts into shapes resembling figures of eight. Her father warned her that she might get into trouble doing this. He was quite right.

The trouble began, stealthily enough, on a Monday morning. Christabel came out of the hotel in which she was spending her holiday feeling simply wonderful.

She ran down to the water, plunged in, and swam out fifty yards or so. But then she couldn't get back. She swam and swam, and got absolutely nowhere. It was very exasperating.

At last a black-haired young man, who had been watching with amusement from the beach, swam out, put his arm around Christabel, and brought her, damp and faintly puzzled, back to land. As he carried her up the beach—not that she needed carrying—he asked her to meet him that evening.

"But I don't even know you," said Christabel.

"Just call me Luce," said the young man. His bronzed arms were very strong, his dark eyes very admiring. He put her down, and Christabel realised she had been very warm and comfortable.

"I really shouldn't," she murmured. "I have an engagement. It wouldn't be fair to break it, do you think?"

"Don't ask me," said Luce. "I'm no expert on morality."

Christabel sighed. "All right; I'll break it."

It was quite a morning for Christabel. On her way down to lunch she caught her heel in a worn bit of hotel carpet and plunged straight into the arms of another young man, tall, fair-haired, and extremely handsome.

His name, it seemed, was Michael; he had just registered at the reception desk. When he had made sure that Christabel was not hurt, he, too, asked her, very politely, to meet him that evening.

"I'm afraid," said Christabel, "I already have an engagement." She looked up through long lashes. "Would it be fair to break it?"

"Certainly not," said Michael firmly. "What about tomorrow?"

Christabel mentally put off the engagement she had had for Tuesday night. "Yes," she said sweetly. "I think that could be arranged!"

She went thoughtfully into the dining-room, where her waiter sprang forward, tripping over his own feet. He was a large, rather clumsy fellow, earning a little extra money by working during the university vacation.

He was so much in love with Christabel that he was constantly dropping dishes. The head waiter always referred to him as That Oaf.

Christabel had a fine time with Luce that night. He was superb on the dance floor, especially in the more torrid rumbas. The only trouble was, Christabel found she grew unaccountably warm while dancing with him. So she suggested a moonlight walk.

Luce agreed with alacrity. But when, in the shadow of a convenient dune, he tried to draw her to him, she pushed him gently away. "You're really rather sweet, Luce," she murmured, "but . . ."

"But what?" asked that hot-eyed young man.

"But I have the queerest feeling that there's something—well—wicked about you. If we're to go on seeing each other, I'm afraid you'll have to reform!"

Luce looked into the slanting green eyes and felt himself grow dizzy—an unfamiliar sensation. "Reform?" he said doubtfully. He paused for a moment and frowned. "I'm not sure that I . . ."

Christabel reached up and straightened his tie. "Of course you can! It's much easier to be good than bad. You'll see." She patted his dark cheek; it felt cooler already.

"Gosh," said Luce weakly, "if you feel like that . . ."

"I do," she said firmly. "Now let's go back to the dance."

The next night Christabel met Michael. He was also a good dancer in a somewhat stately way. But he was rather scornful of the orchestra.

"I know a chap," he said. "Boy, can he play the trumpet! You ought to hear him." He looked thoughtful. "Perhaps you will."

Eventually he also took Christabel out on the beach. Not to try to kiss her or anything like that. To warn her about Luce. "I think it's my duty to tell you that he's no good. In fact, he's an absolute fiend!"

"How do you know?" asked Christabel, much interested.

"I knew him," said Michael darkly, "when."

"You're sweet, Michael," said Christabel, "to worry about me. But don't you think perhaps you're a tiny bit too proper? I mean, there's nothing wrong with a kiss or two, is there?" She looked into his eyes, and he felt a great dizziness seize him.

"Well—er—no," he stammered.

"Why," said Christabel softly, "don't you kiss me, then?" And, "oh," she said a moment later, "did you see that falling star?"

Christabel went on seeing Luce and Michael alternately the rest of the week. By the time Saturday night came around you'd hardly have known either of them. Christabel was very pleased. She asked them both to take her to the dance.

Since she was a young lady who took her time about dressing, it happened that Luce and Michael met each other pacing nervously near the lift. Luce spoke first. "You've changed," he said. "For an archangel you seem a little out of character."

"What about you?" snapped Michael, whose temper was no longer exactly archangelic. "What do you think they're going to say to you when you get home?"

"That," said Lucifer, "is a question you should ask yourself."

"I have," said Michael. "They never should have sent me to protect her from you in the first place. I'm not the—er—person for the job."

"Look, Michael," Lucifer said. "I know

were not supposed to—well—co-operate. But we're both in a bad spot."

"We certainly are," said Michael glumly.

"If we change much more neither of us will be good or bad. We'll just be in love. With Christabel."

"I know it," said Michael miserably. "I never knew a mortal soul like her."

"I have," said the fiend, "a little suggestion." He looked furtively over his shoulder. "You have some—ah—unique powers, haven't you? Well, so have I. Now, if just for once we pooled our . . ."

"The Oaf!" exclaimed Michael, reading him mind, of course.

"Exactly! We'll make her fall in love with The Oaf. Then we can be ourselves again. We can even go home!"

"It's a deal!" cried Michael, and before they knew what they were doing they were shaking hands just as Christabel emerged from the lift.

"And that, children," said the story-teller, "is how your mother happened to marry me, since I am none other than . . ."

"The Oaf!" the children squealed in unison.

"Off to bed now," he said, and patted their small pyjama'd bottoms. He looked across the room at the girl with the smoky green eyes and the red hair. "Fairly accurate version, wasn't it, darling?"

"Not very," said Christabel. "I was in love with you all the time. You oaf!"

(Copyright)

As her rescuer carried Christabel up the beach he asked her to meet him that night. "But I don't know you," answered Christabel.



Hedstrom



# The Royal Tour



**ROTORUA.** The Queen will see Maori children bathing in the naturally heated thermal pools when she visits Rotorua for a Maori reception on New Year's Day.

● Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, accompanied by her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, will arrive in Auckland on December 23 to begin the Royal tour of New Zealand. They will spend 40 days in the north and south islands, travelling 2247 miles and visiting 56 towns and settlements. So extensive is the tour that most of New Zealand's population of over 2,000,000 will have an opportunity of seeing the Queen.



**A**UCKLAND yachtsmen, with their enormous fleet of small craft, plan to welcome the Queen in their flag-bedecked boats when she arrives at their city in the liner Gothic on December 23.

Many yachtsmen will sail their boats to meet the Gothic far out in Hauraki Gulf, the broad and beautiful stretch of water that is the entrance to Auckland Harbor.

Thousands of yachts are expected to put to sea that day and will give the Queen her first glimpse of New Zealand life and customs, for yachting is one of the major pastimes of the people of the North Island of New Zealand.

The sight will be of special interest to the Duke of Edinburgh because he is a keen yachtsman and regularly races in the Cowes Regatta. He will also be given a glimpse of the pleasure ahead for him, for he will be able to put to sea in the keeler which is being prepared for him to take the helm.

A keeler is a sailing yacht with a deep keel. Sailing boats have either keels, centre boards, or lee boards to assist them to sail against the wind.

It is a term rarely used in Australia, but common in New Zealand and the Pacific Islands.

One item of outstanding historic significance in the Queen's programme is the broadcast she will make to the British Commonwealth and Empire from Government House, Auckland, on Christmas Day.

It will be the first Christmas Day broadcast to be made by a British Sovereign while absent from England, and the fact that it will come from Britain's most southern Dominion will give it even greater interest to the speaker as well as to the listeners all over the world.

This broadcast will be the Queen's only official engagement on Christmas Day, which she and her husband will spend at Government House, Auckland, as the guests of the Governor-General, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and Lady Norrie.

Set in lovely grounds close to Auckland's University College, Government House is surrounded by trees, some of them English, palms, and masses of flowers, including frangipani and bougainvillea.

From Auckland the Queen will visit Waitangi, where many Maoris live. They regard her visit as specially important and are planning a tremendous welcome.

"We will make the ground shake with the thunder of our haka and split the



**THE QUEEN** and the Duke of Edinburgh in the Grand Entrance at Buckingham Palace. The Queen is wearing a lovely tulle evening gown trimmed with wattle, and the blue Ribbon and Star of the Garter.

skies asunder with the welcoming roar of our voices," one of their spokesmen said.

It was at Waitangi that Captain Hobson, R.N., made the famous treaty with the Maoris under which they ceded New Zealand to Queen Victoria.

The main Maori welcome will take place at Rotorua. On her way there the Queen, at her own request, will see one of the world's most famous sights—the unique wonders of the glow-worm caves at Waitomo.

She will inspect the caves on New

Year's Eve and will spend the night at the Waitomo Hotel.

Waitomo, in the centre of the North Island, is in an isolated spot but is visited every year by thousands of tourists who go to see the celebrated caves.

At Rotorua the Maoris for the first time will allow a woman—the Queen—to speak in their Marae, or sacred meeting-place. In doing this they will break a tradition they have observed for thousands of years.

*Continued on page 10*



**SNOW-CLAD PEAKS** reflected in a lake in South Westland, beauty spot of the South Island of New Zealand.



**POHUTU GEYSER**, which throws boiling water 60 feet in the air, is at Whakarewarewa, in the North Island.



**LAKE WAKATIPU**, in the South Island, which is typical of the superb scenery the Queen will see during her tour of North and South Islands of New Zealand.



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# Trip to famous caves



WAITOMO HOTEL is a tourist resort situated in the fertile farmlands of the King Country of New Zealand. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will spend New Year's Eve at the hotel, and will stay overnight after their visit to the famous caves.

## The Queen, Duke will see myriad lights in glow-worm grotto

By MARGARET TARRANT

"You are taking us to Waitomo Caves, aren't you?" the Queen asked when her New Zealand tour was being planned. She was speaking to Mr. A. G. Harper, secretary of the Internal Affairs Department of New Zealand, when he visited Buckingham Palace to discuss the Royal itinerary.

SO Waitomo Caves, famous for their glow-worm grotto, were put on the list of places that the Royal party would visit in New Zealand.

The Queen's insistence on a visit to the caves arose from the enthusiasm of her husband's uncle and aunt, the Earl and Countess Mountbatten, who went to Waitomo in 1946.

It was the Mountbattens who told the Queen, "A visit to the caves is a must," when

plans for the tour were developing.

The caves are named Waitomo and Aranui, and are two of the three limestone caverns at Waitomo, where the Royal party will arrive on December 31.

Most unusual and probably the loveliest of the caves is Waitomo, in which is the unique glow-worm grotto. Here millions of tiny glow-worms shine softly with blue-white pin-points of light.

It has been described as "a subterranean fairyland."

An underground river runs through the glow-worm grotto and the visitor enters by boat, floating down the river to arrive in the cavern with its canopy of lights.

It is the only cave in the world known to have underground glow-worms, which differ in type from the outdoor glow-worm.

Beautiful, delicate stalactite and stalagmite formations are a feature of the Aranui Cave, with its deep caverns, lofty, cathedral-like chambers and masses of limestone hangings which look like crystal.

Continued from page 9:

## Her Majesty's itinerary

Although Maoris honor and respect women and will appoint a woman as chief, they do not allow them to speak in the chief's council or tribal discussions.

BEFORE they decided to allow the Queen to speak in their Marae, or sacred meeting-place, they held tribal councils and examined the question with great thoroughness.

At Rotorua the Maoris will sing and dance for the Queen and the Duke in a manner seldom seen and heard today.

There will be feasting, too, and for days before the arrival of the Royal party the hangis, or native ovens, will be steaming.

In the meantime the leaders of the various tribes are busy completing their arrangements in consultation with the Government authorities. Never before has there been such an occasion as this Royal visit, so forms and customs thousands of years old must be con-

sidered and old chants and haka specially revived.

During their stay at Rotorua the Queen and her husband will have several days' holiday at "Moose Lodge," a private residence beside the lake.

Another private residence at which the Queen and the Duke will have a chance to relax from official duties is "Longbeach," 50 miles south of Christchurch. "Longbeach" is one of the best-known sheep stations in the South Island.

Pictures of "Moose Lodge" and "Longbeach" are published in this issue.

At Dunedin the Queen will see "Marching Girls" for the first time. This is a sport in which girls wearing uniforms do intricate marching steps to the music of a band. It originated in New Zealand and has

become popular in Australia.

The sport is also gaining in popularity in the United Kingdom since the recent visit there of the Blair Athol team of girls from New Zealand.

From Dunedin the Royal party will go to Bluff, the most southerly port in New Zealand, to embark in the Gothic for the journey to Australia.

Bluff was once well known for its post office, which was situated farther south than any other in the British Commonwealth. But it has lost this renown since a post office was established in Antarctica.

Now Bluff's main claim to fame is its oyster fleet. As the Queen will be greeted in Auckland by a fleet of white yachts, so she will sail from Bluff through the highly efficient fleet of oyster boats.

These boats sail the world's stormiest seas to gather oysters, some of which have been specially featured on the Royal menu.

—William J. Green



**N.Z.  
ROYAL  
TOUR**

To enable the Queen to see the caves, the New Zealand Government's Tourist Department will close to the public its luxurious Waitomo Hotel to accommodate the Royal party for an over-night stay.

At Waitomo, in the fertile King Country, forty-seven miles south-west of Hamilton and 129 miles south of Auckland, the Royal party will celebrate New Year's Eve.

The ballroom on the lower floor of the hotel has been newly decorated in expectation of the gala turn-of-the-year party.

But final plans for the New Year's Eve celebration are being left for the Queen and the Duke to decide, as every effort is being made to give the Queen as much rest as possible on her strenuous tour of New Zealand.

For months carpenters, builders, and decorators have been at work converting the Waitomo Hotel into suitable quarters for the Royal party.

Walls and doors have been pulled down, rooms opened out, and huge plate-glass windows put along the front of the building overlooking acres of green farmlands.

On the second story, the centre of the hotel has been partitioned off into an apartment for the Queen and the Duke.

Here the largest bedrooms have been converted into sleeping quarters, dressing rooms, and sitting-rooms for the Royal couple.

New carpets specially sent from England arrived early in November to be put down in time for the Queen's visit.

The hotel is booked out until several weeks before the Royal visit by curious sight-seers who want to look at the new renovations and the caves which the Royal party will see.

On New Year's Day the Royal party will leave Waitomo for Rotorua.



# ROYAL CHRISTMAS AT AUCKLAND

## The Queen to attend service in historic church

From our special correspondent in New Zealand

Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh, who are due to arrive in Auckland, New Zealand, on December 23 to spend Christmas at Government House, will not be the first Royal guests to stay in this 35-roomed early colonial building.

**G**OVERNMENT HOUSE has often entertained Royalty in its lifetime of 98 years, but this is the first time it will have housed a reigning monarch.

Other Royal guests who have stayed at this reproduction 18th-century manor house are Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, in 1869; King George V and Queen Mary, then the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, in 1901; King Edward VIII as Prince of Wales in 1920; King George VI and Queen Elizabeth as Duke and Duchess of York in 1927; and the Duke of Gloucester in 1934.

Famous commoners have also slept at Government House, including author Robert Louis Stevenson.

Royalty and other distinguished visitors have planted some of the oak trees in the grounds.

During World War II Government House was used for two years as a club for service men and women.

Government House is the official Auckland residence of the Governor-General of New Zealand, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and Lady Norrie, who will be hosts to the Queen and the Duke.

A well-trained staff has been retained to ensure that the Royal guests receive every at-

tention and comfort during their stay.

In charge of the catering is Elizabeth Brown, who is well known as an excellent cook not only in Australia and New Zealand but also in Britain. Her assistant, Ivy Scratchley, who comes from Wales, is also an expert cook.

Butler Ernest Westly, who has been schooled in the traditions of British upper-class families during periods of service in England, will be in charge of the organisation of all parties.

Head housemaid Christine Walker was a housemaid at Buckingham Palace and Windsor Castle before she came to New Zealand seven years ago, and so is well versed in serving Royalty. She also worked for the Duchess of Northumberland.

### Scottish chauffeur

**H**EAD chauffeur James Emslie is a Scot who takes a great pride in the appearance of the cars under his care. He was formerly head chauffeur at Government House, Adelaide.

When the Queen wakes on December 25 she will, perhaps, find it hard to believe it is Christmas Day. Instead of the snow and the bare trees of her native England she will see the tropical brilliance of a



**N.Z. ROYAL TOUR**

garden filled with hibiscus shrubs and canna lilies.

But Auckland has planned elaborate seasonal decorations in honor of the first visit of a reigning monarch to New Zealand, including a 50ft. high Christmas tree just outside the main gates of Government House.

The tree will be ablaze with colored lights and surmounted by a huge, illuminated Star of Bethlehem.

The tree will inevitably remind the Queen of her children, Prince Charles and Princess Anne, who are spending Christmas without their parents.

Although she will have a telephone in her suite, installed by the New Zealand Post and Telegraph Department to give her an almost "on demand" service to England, she will not be able to wish the children a happy Christmas for another 12 hours.

For while it is Christmas morning in Auckland it will be only Christmas Eve at Sandringham, where the Royal children are spending the holiday season.

A light breakfast will be served to the Royal guests, and will include a pot of pohutukawa honey, made from the nectar of New Zealand's native Christmas tree.

Christmas trees are now in bloom, and their rich, red flowers make brilliant splashes of color along the New Zealand coast.

Honey for the Queen was specially gathered from hives on Rangitoto Island, a landmark in Auckland's Waitemata Harbor, which is visible from the Queen's suite.

The Queen, like her father, the late King George VI, acquired a taste for pohutukawa honey when a New Zealand High Commissioner in London presented some to the Royal Family. The honey is scarce, and is rarely seen even in New Zealand larders.

If the day is fine, the Queen



ST. MARY'S CATHEDRAL, Auckland, where Queen Elizabeth will attend service on Christmas Day, is architecturally one of the finest wooden churches in New Zealand and the Southern Hemisphere. Built of kauri, it was designed by an early immigrant.

and the Duke will be able to stroll round the seven-and-a-half-acre grounds of Government House after breakfast.

A little after 10.30 a.m. Her Majesty will drive three miles to St. Mary's Cathedral, Parnell, to attend morning service.

The route planned is along Prince's St. past the picturesque Auckland University College Building to O'Rourke St., where the decrepit central police court stands. From there the route leads up Symonds St. over the narrow Grafton Bridge, past the Auckland Public Hospital, and through the Domain.

The Domain is a huge tract of open country in the very heart of the city.

Parnell Rd., where St. Mary's Cathedral is situated, is not a fashionable street. Nor is St. Mary's a cathedral in anything but name. It has no steeple and spire and is actually just a parish church which is being used by the Bishop of Auckland until his diocese has

raised enough money to build him a cathedral.

But the 67-year-old wooden church is architecturally one of the finest wooden buildings in the Southern Hemisphere.

Built of kauri heartwood, it was designed by Benjamin Woodfield Mountford, who came from Britain in one of New Zealand's first four immigrant ships.

The church is sure to be crowded on Christmas Day, but its pews do not hold many more than 1000 worshippers. Gnarled oaks in the churchyard grew from acorns gathered by colonists in Windsor Great Park, London.

### The service

**A**T the church gates the Queen will be met by the Bishop of Auckland, silver-haired William John Simkin, the Dean of St. Mary's, the Very Reverend G. R. Monteith, who is the son of an Australian farmer, and by other church dignitaries.

The Royal party will proceed into the church accompanied by a band of choir boys singing "Once in Royal David's City."

A pew designed by Sydney architect Charles Toie, who has also drawn the plans for the city's permanent cathedral, will be occupied by the Queen and the Duke.

Built of creamy Southland beech, the pew stands in the front of the church, has a crown carved on one end and the Royal Cypher on the backrest of the Queen's seat.

Dean Monteith will conduct the service and Bishop Simkin will preach the sermon. The service will last about an hour and music will include

psalms, canticles, and a Te Deum by Martin Shaw and a Jubilate by Harold Rhodes, who are both prominent English church musicians.

Christmas hymns will be old favorites such as "O Come, All Ye Faithful" and "Hark, the Herald Angels Sing."

Senior music lecturer at Auckland University College, Dr. Charles Nalden, will conduct the choir of 20 boys, 12 sopranos, eight altos, seven tenors, and nine basses.

Organist and music master at King's Boys' College, Mr. L. M. C. Saunders, will be at the organ.

The Governor-General, Sir Willoughby Norrie, will read the first lesson and the Duke of Edinburgh the second. Part of the service will be recorded and broadcast in the British Broadcasting Corporation's "Newsteele."

Copies of the service will be specially printed and bound, and will be presented to Her Majesty and the Duke as mementoes.

After the service, the Royal couple will return to Government House, where a wonderful Christmas dinner will be almost ready. The menu will probably include New Zealand lamb, garden-fresh peas, and new potatoes, as well as rare wines and liqueurs from Government House's capacious cellars.

The official day will end with the Queen's traditional Christmas broadcast to the Commonwealth, the second of her reign. Her Majesty will speak into a microphone at a desk in her sitting-room. The speech will be carried by telephone to an Auckland radio station and sent to Australia.

From Australia the speech will be rebroadcast by short-wave to the world.



LEFT: The Queen makes her first Christmas broadcast as sovereign in England last year. At right is the sitting-room in Government House, Auckland, from which Her Majesty will broadcast to the nation this year on December 25.

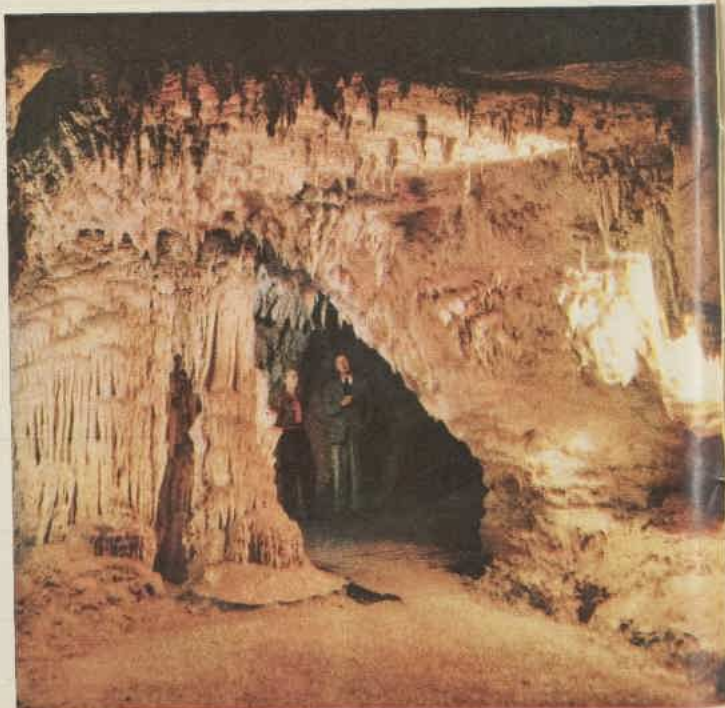
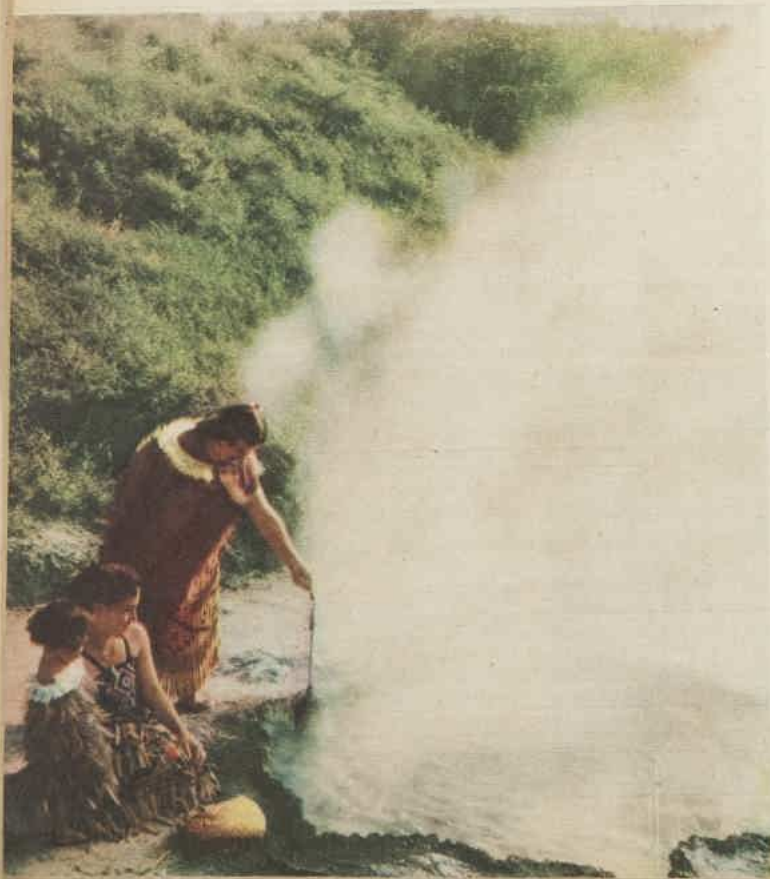




# DOMINION AGOG FOR VISIT



*KING'S WHARF, Lambton Harbor, Wellington, where the Royal tour liner Gothic will berth from January 9 to 16.*



*MAORI COOKING with thermal heat, which the Queen may see, is a type of pressure cooking. Food is quickly cooked by steam in flax baskets or placed on hot stones in a hangi (earth oven).*

*AT WAITOMO CAVES (above) in Auckland Province, which the Queen and the Duke will visit on New Year's Eve, they will see the famous glow-worm cave and stay at the Hotel Waitomo for the night.*





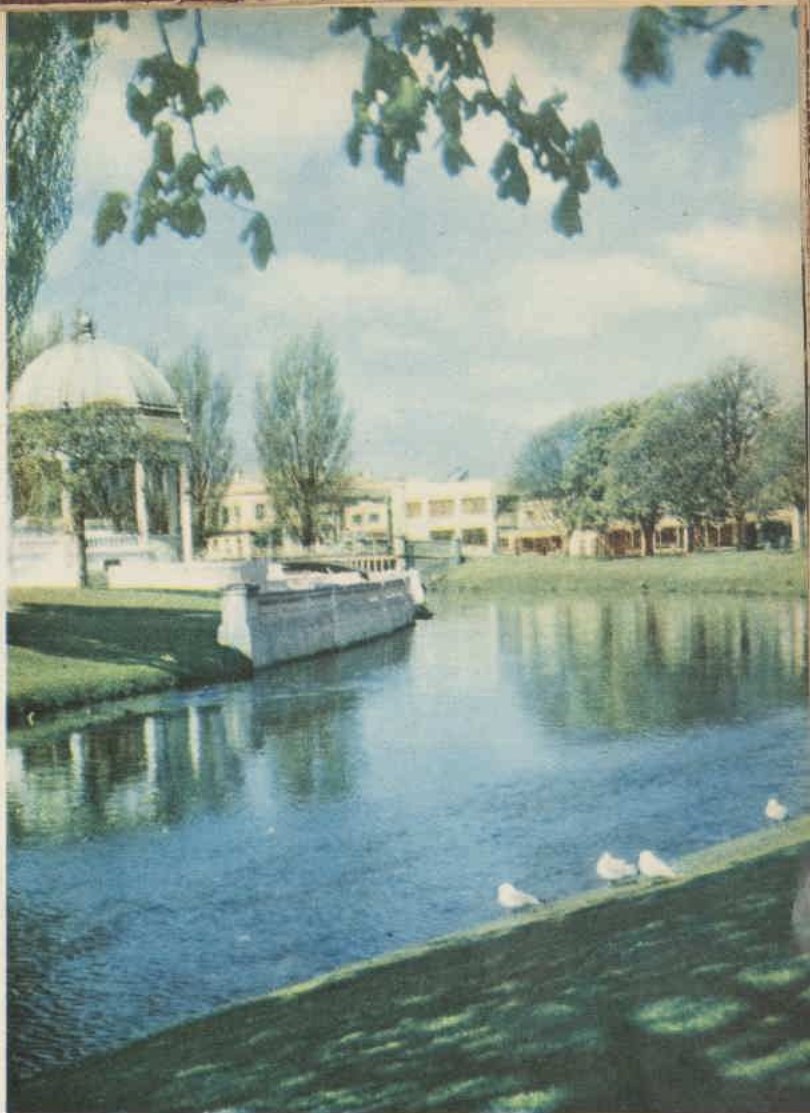
# N.Z. ROYAL TOUR

• Christmas will be a Royal occasion in New Zealand this year as the Queen and her husband will be there. Here are pictures of some places they will visit.



ROTORUA (above). Carver at work outside a Maori show house at village of Whakarewarewa. The Queen will attend an elaborate Maori reception on January 2.

BAND ROTUNDA on the River Avon at Christchurch, South Island (right). The Queen will also hold an investiture in Christchurch on her visit there.



THE QUEEN will open a special session of Parliament at Wellington on January 12 in the handsome building seen above. A reception for Members of Parliament and their wives will follow, and there will be an investiture at night. Wellington is the capital.



ON BOXING DAY the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will attend a race meeting at beautiful Ellerslie Racecourse, Auckland, North Island, famous for its gardens. The Queen will make her Christmas broadcast from Government House, Auckland.





**BOAT BUILDER** Dave Marks (above), of Auckland, New Zealand, at work on the "P" class yacht commissioned for Prince Charles.

**ROYAL CHILDREN** (right) Prince Charles and Princess Anne were to bystanders near Buckingham Palace. While their parents are away they are mostly staying at Windsor, where they have several playmates.



## Boy-size yacht present for the Prince

One of the gifts specially made in New Zealand to be presented to the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh for Prince Charles is a "P" class yacht, the delight of every aquatic-minded New Zealand boy and girl.

The seven-foot yacht will be the gift of the Auckland Harbor Board, which commissioned it from Dave Marks, 28-year-old boat builder, of Glendowie, Auckland.

**I**N accepting the yacht, the Queen need have no fears for the young Prince when he is ready to sail it.

The 100-pound craft is as near unsinkable as a boat can be. Even with its tiny cockpit filled with water it will remain afloat.

These "P"—or Tauranga—class yachts are practically nursery equipment for budding New Zealand yachtsmen. In the summer scores of youngsters graduate from tricycles and pedal-cars to a "P."

Girls of nine or ten, as well as boys, demand them as Christmas presents.

### Safe craft

**M**OST regatta programmes include capsize races for the "P." In such events the youthful sailors are required to overturn their boats and right them several times during the race, thus also demonstrating to anxious mothers just how really safe the craft are.

The yacht should thrill Prince Charles, who has already shown signs of inheriting his father's love of the sea.

Last summer at Balmoral, taught by the Duke, he developed the hobby of sailing his own boats, home-made of paper with small sticks for masts.

Before leaving on the Royal tour, the Queen and the Duke consoled the children for the separation with promises of lots of postcards and presents.

Prince Charles, remembering the cowboy suits from Canada and the fun of dress-

ing-up as a Red Indian, with a feathered headdress, and Princess Anne, reminded by her dolls from Kenya, are inclined to regard the Royal tour as an excursion by their parents for toys.

But Prince Charles' reply to a sympathiser before his mother left indicated that he had reached an adult appreciation of the situation.

"It's what a Queen has to do," he said.

The Queen got the children gradually used to the idea of separation.

There was no sad talk about Mummy and Papa going away, but plenty of exciting stories about the great planes and the giant ship on which they would travel.

Even so, the Queen was anxious that the children should have plenty to occupy them.

"Give them fresh interests," was one of her instructions to the governess, Miss Katherine Peebles, who gives Prince Charles morning lessons.

Realising that Princess Anne would be lonely while her brother was in the schoolroom, the Queen arranged that some of their little friends would be invited to play with Princess Anne in the mornings.

After lessons the Royal children have stories, sand modelling, and games together, and it is in this playtime that Miss Peebles gently educates them about the countries their parents are visiting.

Being informed with stories and pictures of the progress of the Royal tour is one way the children are kept from missing their parents.

This year Christmas Day for the Prince and Princess will begin with all the extra excitement of hearing their mother's voice.

Just as the children are stretching out to take the presents from their Christmas stockings, the nursery wireless will be turned on for the Queen's Christmas broadcast from Auckland.

The Queen Mother will be hostess at the Royal Family Christmas party at Sandringham. The Queen has asked her mother to see that all the members of the Royal Family are invited and that the traditional Christmas is celebrated just as though she were in England.

**B**EFORE leaving on the tour the Queen spent a short while organising the party she will be missing.

The Christmas tree is to be cut down on the estate, the tenants are to have their presents on Christmas morning, and the carol singers are to be entertained afterwards to mince pies and hot drinks.

Newsreels of the tour are to be shown to the guests at Sandringham.

With the young members of the Royal Family growing up, the Queen issued invitations to dances and parties over the Christmas and New Year season and reorganised some of the rooms so that there is more space for parties and more privacy for the older children.

It is unlikely that the Queen will telephone her children often during the tour, but the Duke's frequent wire record-

ings are being mailed back and played over to them.

The children are TV fans, but Nurse Lightbody has been told to restrict their viewing to a few times a week and only for the children's programme.

Both the Prince and Princess have their own cars now. At night, when they are at Buckingham Palace, the cars stand at the end of the corridor just inside the grand entrance.

The children race downstairs in the morning, rush their cars out into the garden, and drive furiously round the paths and over the lawns.

The Council of State has become used to seeing these tiny figures racing under the windows.

Prince Charles, who has a formal way of speaking, is fond of pattering round the offices when he can get out of the schoolroom and away from Nanny and asking what is happening.

He likes the company of grown-ups. He always asks if they are too busy to play with him, and doesn't mind the many rebuffs he gets when told that they are.

### No spoiling

**W**ITH the Queen absent, the interest at the Palace is naturally focused on the children. But the Queen is anxious that cheers and adulation are not allowed to make them feel self-important.

Keeping the children in the background is to be the rule rather than the exception during the Royal tour.

They will spend most of the time quietly at Royal Lodge, Windsor, where they have many local playmates and can ride their ponies, Cloudy and Heather Maid.

When they are in London the Queen Mother is giving them outings at the Zoo and the children's section of the famous museums.

Wherever the Queen is, she and the Duke are receiving long reports of their children, lots of informal snapshots, and films of their progress.

The reels are sent out to the Queen and shown on Gothic.



**TAURANGA**, or "P" class yachts, in Auckland Harbor. Prince Charles' boat is a standard type—seven feet long, with a 3ft. by 26in. cockpit. Picture by "Seacraft."



# HOSTS TO HER MAJESTY



## N.Z. ROYAL TOUR

● The Queen and the Duke will be guests of N.Z. Governor-General Sir Willoughby Norrie at Government House, Auckland, and later at Government House, Wellington.



NEW ZEALAND'S GOVERNOR-GENERAL, Sir Willoughby Norrie, and Lady Norrie with their daughters, Sarah and Annabel, in the garden of Government House, Wellington. Sir Willoughby was formerly Governor of South Australia.



GOVERNMENT HOUSE, Wellington, Zealand, where the Queen and the Duke stay from January 9 to January 15.



DRESSING-ROOM to be used by the Duke of Edinburgh during the Royal visit to Government House, Wellington, has Southland beech furniture and tawny-pink upholstery.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — December 23, 1953



ABOVE: The Queen's portrait by Sir Edward Halliday is hung above the mantelpiece in the drawing-room which she will use. Right: The Queen's bedroom.



Page 15



# Prompt natural laxative action

DISCOVER NEW HEALTH WITH  
GENTLE ACTING NYAL FIGSEN



Prevents  
"wind" pains

After each feeding, NYAL Milk of Magnesia is the ideal preventive for "wind" pains and acidity in infants. Its gentle laxative action ensures regular habits, too. Pleasant to take. Pure and safe for even the youngest baby.  
Sweetened or Regular. 2's, 4's  
NYAL MILK OF MAGNESIA



Positive relief  
from coughing

The three-way action of NYAL Decongestant Cough Elixir—the dependable modern cough formulation—"breaks up" even the heaviest congestion quickly. Reduces swelling in the bronchial tubes, making breathing easier; stops irritating coughing; cuts away phlegm; soothes sore, inflamed tissues of throat and chest.  
5's, 9's  
NYAL DECONGESTANT COUGH ELIXIR



Stops  
chafing

NYAL Baby Powder brings soothing, cooling comfort for baby's sensitive skin. Contains an ingredient which resists moisture, lessens the chance of wet nappies chafing baby's tender skin. Make this simple test—rub NYAL Baby Powder on to the back of the hand; drop one or two drops of water on to the powder—see how it runs off. Two sizes.  
2's, 4's  
NYAL BABY POWDER



Sold only by Chemists

Feel better and brighter to-morrow by ridding yourself O-NIGHT of constipation. Be regular—and keep regular—naturally with NYAL Figsen, the gentle-acting, pleasant-tasting laxative.

The active ingredient of Figsen is a laxative agent which medical experience has found to be mild, gentle and effective. Figsen won't upset even sensitive stomachs. It acts gently, without pain or griping, to bring prompt, comfortable relief from constipation.

Figsen comes in convenient tablet form—makes it easy to take anywhere, anytime. Pleasant-tasting. Two strengths—Regular, equally suitable for adults and children; Double Strength for those adults who find that they need a more positive laxative action.

DOUBLE STRENGTH 3/6 2's

## NYAL FIGSEN

### ASK FOR THESE OTHER DEPENDABLE NYAL PRODUCTS

NYAL Antacid Powder ..... 3/6  
NYAL Aspirin-Codine Tablets 2's, 3's  
NYAL Care Remover ..... 2/3  
NYAL Earache Drops ..... 2/3  
NYAL Ensilified Liquid Paraffin ..... 4/6  
NYAL Eye Drops (Decongestant) ..... 6/9  
NYAL Elixir ..... 3/6  
NYAL Eye Lotion (with Plastic Eye) ..... 3/9  
NYAL Vitamin and Mineral ..... 4/-  
NYAL Vitaminized Children's Tonic 5/9  
NYAL Camphor Ice ..... 1/10  
NYAL Halitine (Dental Plate Powder) ..... 3/-  
NYAL Chlorine (Dental Plate Cleaner) ..... 3/7

#### FOR COUGHS, COLDS & FLU

NYAL Baby Cough Syrup ..... 2/9, 3/9  
NYAL Bronchitis Mixture ..... 3/9, 6/3  
NYAL Children's Cough Mixture ..... 2/9, 3/9  
NYAL Coughdrops ..... 3/6, 6/3, 7/6  
NYAL Cough Mixture ..... 4/3  
NYAL Honey Cough Elixir ..... 3/6  
NYAL Quinine & The Mixture ..... 4/9  
NYAL Whooping Cough Syrup ..... 1/6

#### FIRST AID NEEDS

NYAL Antiseptic Dressing ..... 2/-  
NYAL Antiseptic Ointment ..... 2/9  
NYAL Sunburn Cream ..... 3/-  
NYAL White Lintment ..... 3/6, 5/6  
NYAL Zinc Cream ..... 2/3

#### WINTER MEDICINES

NYAL Children's Pain ..... 2/9  
NYAL Cold Sore Cream ..... 2/3  
NYAL Cold Sore Lotion ..... 2/3  
NYAL Croup Ointment ..... 2/9  
NYAL Sore Throat Gargle ..... 2/9, 3/9  
NYAL Thunkies ..... 1/9, 2/6  
NYAL Induced Throat Tablets 1/11, 2/9

#### BABY NEEDS

NYAL Columbin-Lanolin Cream ..... 2/3  
NYAL Soothing Syrup ..... 2/9  
NYAL Teething Powders ..... 2/-  
NYAL Warm Syrup ..... 2/9  
NYAL Baby Soap ..... 1/11  
NYAL Baby Oil ..... 2/9

Bobo works round the clock

## Helping the Queen to dress is her exacting job

One of the most exacting jobs in the Royal Household is that of Miss Margaret MacDonald, personal maid to the Queen, who has complete charge of Her Majesty's wardrobe and is accompanying her mistress on the Royal tour in the capacity of dresser.

From  
ANNE MATHESON,  
our Royal tour  
correspondent

When the Queen was Princess Elizabeth it was Bobo who insisted she should rest in the afternoons. On long journeys it was Bobo who kept a watchful eye on the Princess. She was half nurse, half maid.

If Bobo thought some article in the Princess' wardrobe was too commonplace, she removed it. One story goes that she even sent a handbag back to the shop because it was in rather too popular taste.

This was an over-the-shoulder bag Princess Elizabeth ordered when she was first taking an interest in clothes.

Miss MacDonald has a Royal tour wardrobe herself that any girl might well envy. She bought cottons at the same time as the Queen bought her off-the-hook models. She is the same size as the Queen, but her different coloring called for quite different patterns and shades.

Bobo has cocktail dresses and dinner dresses, and dines and dances with the Duke's valet and other Royal servants on board ship and in hotels at which the Royal party stays on the tour.

Bobo MacDonald has a sister, Robie, who is maid to Princess Margaret, and the two Highland girls spend such off-duty hours as they get at the same time going to films. Their brother, a major in a well-known regiment, is frequently their escort.

They spend summer holidays with their parents at Balmoral.

As well as dressing the Queen and taking care of her priceless

collection of jewels, Bobo looks after and carries the Queen's beauty box. It is a neat pigskin case filled with all the cosmetics the Queen requires.

The beauty box has the Royal Cypher just under the handle and is "never out of Bobo's hand." Stepping on and off planes, trains, and boats, a few paces behind the ladies-in-waiting to the Queen, the slim, active figure of Bobo can frequently be seen, beauty box in hand, waiting to race ahead to unpack and get the right clothes ready for the next engagement.

Every day is long and tiring for Bobo, but hers is a devotion that never counts the time spent serving a Queen who gives herself so unstintingly to serving her people.

dress the Queen in the required frock. And never is Bobo without all the accessories.

Like most women, Queen Elizabeth has favorite dresses and "wears them to death."

It is Bobo who keeps the well-worn dresses looking as fresh as when they were new. Though she does no sewing—a seamstress is travelling on the Gothic, pressing and keeping the Queen's dresses pin-neat—Bobo keeps her eye on dipping hemlines, frayed tulle, loose beads, and all the things that can ruin the appearance of even the loveliest frock.

Leading Mayfair designers Hardy Amies and Norman Hartnell between them design



BOBO MacDonald,  
personal maid to the Queen

Bobo, slim, with pale red hair and blue eyes, is in her thirties. A Scots girl, daughter of one of the tenant farmers at Balmoral, she has served Her Majesty since the Queen left the schoolroom and the care of her old nurse, Mrs. Knight.

It has been a long and close association between the Royal mistress and the Scots girl, who came without training to be maid to a Princess. Now Bobo has an assistant dresser, Miss MacGregor.

Dressing the Queen is not only Bobo's privilege, but also her great joy. She is just as excited as anyone else when the Queen appears beautifully dressed.

All day while the Queen is carrying out her official programme Bobo is working steadily and competently in the background, so that in the short while between functions the Queen can change without a hitch.

Bobo has a "key" to the Queen's wardrobe. It is a book of sketches of the clothes—in each case the designer's own working sketches in color—and with each dress are sketches of the accessories that go with it. Each is numbered and indexed, and the whole book is bound in white leather bearing the Royal Cypher.

The Queen usually chooses her dresses for the day early in the morning. But, woman-like, she frequently changes her mind at the last moment and wants to wear another.

Bobo MacDonald is never ruffled, even though it means unpacking from trunks in the baggage-room some distance from the Royal apartments.

Bobo so understands and anticipates the Queen's wishes that it is rarely she cannot

and make most of the Queen's clothes.

When the Queen needs new outfits the dressmakers take sketches and samples of material along for her to see. Sometimes they take a couple of their top mannequins also to model their latest creations so that the Queen can judge the newest colors and lines.

Bobo is always present on these occasions, and when choosing her clothes the Queen frequently consults her maid. Bobo's advice is practical.

It was she who advised against pleating on the dresses for the tour, knowing that unless it remained fresh and neat the frock would be a loss after the first few times it was worn.

Miss MacDonald, as everyone who serves Her Majesty knows, stands as a bulwark between people and the Queen.





# N.Z. Worth Reporting

## ROYAL TOUR

**DOWN** at the Radiogram Department of the General Post Office, Sydney, we stood beside two receiving sets which emitted canary-like warblings, pitched high, then low.

Mr. W. Bullivant, Supervisor of Telegraphists, explained that the high squeaks represented black portions, the low white portions of Royal tour photos which were being received from overseas.

For our untechnical mind, he first described the workings of a picturegram in terms of a reel of cotton:

"Take a white cotton reel and draw the letter A on it with ink. Unwind the whole thing—you'll have lots of white and bits of black. Rewind it carefully and the letter A will be reassembled."

The technicalities, put into simple language, are these: The picture to be transmitted is placed on a cylindrical drum which revolves once every second and also moves along at the rate of 100th of an inch at each revolution.

Focused in the picture is a small spot of light which, as the drum revolves, successively illuminates every part of the picture. The light, reflected through a series of lenses, is converted into electrical impulses, which can be transmitted by wires, cables, or radio.

At the receiving end a drum revolving at the same rate has a film attached to it, with a spot of light focusing upon it. The light varies according to the electrical impulses received from the transmitting machine, and reproduces the original picture on a negative, which is then developed and printed.

Sixteen technicians staff the picturegram-room at the G.P.O., attending to the two receivers and one transmitter. They say they are so used to the electrical sounds that they scarcely notice them.

### Floral carpet for the Queen

**THIRTY-FOUR** thousand children from schools in the western suburbs of Sydney will be able to claim that they gave bouquets to the Queen.

Mr. A. E. Miles, headmaster of the Homebush Central School and organiser of school-children who will see the Queen when she visits Concord Park, told us:

"Each schoolchild will bring a posy of flowers from home, and will place it on the grass, to make a floral carpet, which the Queen will see as she drives past."

"After the Queen leaves, the flowers will be placed on the park's war memorial."

A guard of honor for the Queen will be formed by 100 boys and girls who are captains of their schools.

Instead of waving flags, boys will have tricolor ribbon streamers pinned to their coats, and girls will have streamers tied to their left wrists.



### Greetings from aborigines

**THREE** dozen aborigines from the Yalata Reserve in the F-r west of South Australia will travel 500 miles to Whyalla, where they will entertain the Queen with spear-throwing, boomerang-hurling, and a corroboree.

Among the aborigines will be some who appeared in the Tommy Trinder film "Bitter Springs."

While away from the reserve, the aborigines will be looked after by Mr. Gaden, who is in charge of the Koonibba Lutheran Mission at Yalata.

In Queensland, too, the Queen will see natives from the Northern Territory, Torres Straits, and Palm Island giving greetings in song and dance at Toowoomba, Townsville, and Cairns.

The Palm Islanders, who recently distinguished themselves by winning the Inter-settlement Shield for arts and crafts from Queensland's aborigines, will show the Queen their handicrafts when she visits Townsville.

There will be no back seats for Queensland aborigines at civic receptions. They will sit directly in front of the Royal dais.

**PRACTISING** her curtsy for the Queen is eight-year-old Jill Samson, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Derek Samson, of Fremantle, W.A., who will be the last Australian child to farewell the Queen before she sails for home in the Gothic.

Descendant of a pioneering family who came to the West in 1829, Jill was due to curtsy and to present a bouquet on the projected visit of Princess Elizabeth in 1952. Disappointed then, she is thrilled now because she will meet the Queen.



**EXACTLY** 150 years after Lieut.-Governor Collins arrived in Tasmania to found the city of Hobart, Queen Elizabeth will step ashore at Princes Pier—only half a mile from the original landing site.

She will arrive in Hobart on February 20. Her visit will coincide with Tasmania's Sesqui-Centenary Celebrations, which began in September, 1953, and will extend to November, 1954, thus taking in the 150th anniversary of the founding of Launceston by William Patterson, who landed at Port Dalrymple, on the Tamar River.

### London Coronation piece now here

**ALTHOUGH** Manly is not on the Royal route, residents of this popular Sydney seaside suburb are hoping that the Queen will visit them unofficially to see a Coronation decoration piece which originally stood in Whitehall, London.

The piece is an heraldic coat of arms incorporating the Royal coat of arms with a lion and unicorn motif. Made of aluminium, it is painted gold, is 65ft. high, 14ft. wide, and weighs 10 tons.

The makers, Starkey-Gardner, of London, offered the piece for £1000 instead of the £10,000 it cost to make.

The piece will be open for inspection by the public on December 18, and will remain in the Corso, Manly's gayest street, for at least a year.

By night it will be illuminated by brilliant lights, which will make it visible for miles.

Already Katoomba, on the Blue Mountains of N.S.W., has asked for a loan of the piece after it leaves Manly. A similar request has been received from the United States.

### Clamor for Royal dresses

**AUSTRALIAN** women are besieging frock departments of big city stores to inquire when dresses like the "off-the-peg" cotton worn by the Queen when she arrived in Jamaica will be available.

The Queen wore a 94/11 frock with a square neckline, medium-length sleeves, and a full skirt.

The material was printed in a Victorian wallpaper design with small pink roses on yellow stripes and had two rows of tiny buttons down the front of the bodice.

The frock is one of several the Queen chose from Horrocks' London spring collection, but a representative of the firm in Sydney said that copies will not be seen in Sydney or London shops until after the Royal tour.

"We can't have the Royal route lined with women all dressed the same as Her Majesty," he said firmly.

**A WRITHING** 63-foot fire-breathing dragon and a 21-foot lion, both imported from China, will undulate through Melbourne on Labor Day, March 8, during the Queen's visit.

Both lion and dragon will be animated for the two-and-a-half-mile journey along Melbourne streets by members of the Young Chinese League, who will be hidden under the wire - and - bamboo - ribbed frames.

Drums and cymbals will provide noise, fire-crackers additional noise and smoke. President of the Young Chinese League, Mr. Frank Chinn, told us that he hoped March 8 would be fine. Rain, he said, would cause the gaudy paint on the dragon to run.

### Volunteer patrol in welcome to Gothic

**ONLY** volunteer organisation in the British Empire which has been provided for under special rules governing the Royal arrival is the Volunteer Coastal Patrol of Sydney, whose Officer Commanding is Mr. H. W. G. Nobbs.

When the Gothic enters Sydney Harbor, 48 boats of the V.C.P., four from the Army, three from the R.A.A.F., six from the Maritime Services Board, and eight from the Police Force will patrol the Harbor, keeping channels clear and controlling the thousands of privately owned launches and yachts.

"We'll start work at seven the night before," said Mr. Nobbs, "and stay on duty until the next day. Then from 5 p.m. to 9.30 p.m. we will keep people out of the danger area during the fireworks display."

**WE** gather that there'll be plenty of Me Toos (local and overseas varieties) when the Royal tour hits Australia.

According to British friends, they travel in the wake of VIPs, uttering the plaintive query "Me Too?" when the subject of a trip, a banquet, or a reception comes up.

## PAIN goes quicker with DISPRIN

... because DISPRIN is soluble



You get faster relief from pain with Disprin because it quickly dissolves and enters your stomach in solution, thus ensuring rapid absorption into the bloodstream. Because ordinary aspirin and a.p.c. merely break up and enter your stomach as undissolved particles, they cannot act on pain as fast as Disprin. You can end pain faster with Disprin.

Disprin is obtainable from all chemists, in packages of 100, 26, and the handy 8 tablet handbag or pocket pack.

### TRY THIS EXPERIMENT

Drop a Disprin tablet and ordinary aspirin or ordinary a.p.c. into separate glasses of water. See how Disprin really dissolves; see by contrast how the others merely break up. They behave differently in water: they behave differently in your stomach.



**DISPRIN** Regd.  
THE NEW Soluble ASPIRIN

SCARVES, CLOVES, HANDKERCHIEFS

**Francis** PARIS

ACCESSORIES

AVAILABLE THROUGHOUT AUSTRALIA

CURE YOUR HAIR BRITISH SUN AND SUNT

BESTOKE, BOTTLED AND SHOWN, AND PROTECT THE LIFE OF YOUR HAIR WITH

**MODE-OLINE** HAIR VITALIZER

Available in Sydney, Adelaide, Melbourne, Perth, and other cities.



To be lovely  
all summer through...  
your hair needs regular  
**NAPRO - care**

**NAPRO SHAMPOOS . . .**  
*to keep your hair silky soft*

Cleanliness—the first essential of hair beauty—means frequent NAPRO Shampoos. Never use toilet or washing soap, for even the best leave a dull sediment. NAPRO Shampoos make your hair silky soft, aglow with highlights, radiantly clean. If your hair is dry or moderately oily, use NAPRO Lecithine Shampoo—Lecithine, a wonderful ingredient of egg yolk, nourishes and beautifies each strand. For those with very oily hair there is NAPRO Tar Shampoo, containing the refreshing and stimulating properties of tar oils.

**NAPRO HAIR VITALIZER . . .**  
*to restore vital natural oils*

Wind, sun and salt water play havoc with your hair . . . dry out vital natural oils . . . make your hair brittle and hard to manage. That's why it needs the extra beauty care of NAPRO Hair Vitalizer. No more dryness! No more splitting ends or flaky dandruff! NAPRO Vitalizer leaves your hair soft and lustrous . . . the comb simply floats through it—it sets more easily, curls more easily. Your hairdresser knows the value of NAPRO Hair Vitalizer and uses it in salon treatments. And you, too, in your own home, should use this famous reconditioner.

**NAPRO Lecithine SHAMPOO**

*For dry or moderately oily hair.*

**NAPRO TAR SHAMPOO**

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# FIJIANS GREET THE QUEEN

## Women take major part in native rites of welcome

By ANNE MATHESON, our Royal tour correspondent in Fiji

For two months before the Queen's arrival in Fiji, Fijian ladies of quality rehearsed the qalowaqa, the traditional ceremony of welcome, usually performed by men.

Women were chosen to perform this ceremony for the first time in the island's modern history as a tribute to Her Majesty as a woman.

"WE rehearsed until it was absolutely perfect," Lady Sukuna told me.

This jolly 50-year-old Fijian woman, known better in Fiji as Lady Maria Vosawale, headed the 100 ladies performing the ceremony in Albert Park, Suva.

Lady Maria overruled the men, who pointed out that high-born visitors have always been given official welcomes by the men.

She was supported in her arguments by her husband, handsome, erudite Ratu (Chief) Sir Lala Sukuna.

Sir Lala pointed out that since the Sovereign was a woman it must be ladies' day on the island.

Lady Maria made her costume for the qalowaqa. It is a three-tiered tapa (bark cloth) skirt and middie blouse of off-white tapa, the beaten

bark decorated with symbolic emblems of all the 15 Fijian provinces.

For two months also the Fijian ladies were getting their hair in trim—setting it high and curly with putty to keep it in place.

Every head was dyed with the bark of trees and roots to the deepest black. And before the Queen's arrival most of the ladies slept with their necks on pieces of rock lest a comfortable pillow disturb the tightly packed curls that were to be teased out on the morning of the Queen's arrival.

The Queen's welcome was planned by the islanders as a strict ceremonial.

As Gothic sailed through the coral reef into Suva, 15 Fijian outrigger canoes were to meet her, dipping their mat sails in welcome.

They would sail to the unaccompanied singing of the islanders ashore, their superbly

resonant voices carrying right across the bay in the haunting song, "Isa Lei," punctuated by a salute of 21 guns from the Fiji artillery.

The Governor of Fiji, Sir Ronald Garvey, Lady Garvey, and a small party of chiefs would board the yacht for cavuilekele, the first—and very short—assurance of welcome.

At the end of this ceremony the Royal party goes ashore.

At King's Wharf, six-year-old May Mai Nona, daughter of Major Ratu Ga Nilau, second in command of the Fiji Battalion in Malaya, would step forward, bow (the only break with Fijian tradition), and present a bouquet in vivid hues from pink hibiscus to creamy frangipani.

After this, the Queen would inspect the guard of honor mounted by Fiji military forces, receive the Mayor and Mayoress of Suva and city councillors before driving through the city to Albert Park for the women's qalowaqa.

This welcome is a silent one. As rehearsed so carefully, this was the programme:

The thousands who fill the Albert Park are hushed, and they squat in respectful recognition of a high-born presence.

No woman speaks directly to the Queen, nor does the Queen speak.

The mantanivanua (spokesman)—in this instance Lady Maria—sits beside the Sovereign receiving gifts of welcome, but no Fijian woman would curtsy to the Queen, nor would she stand in the Queen's presence.

This would be a mark of utter disrespect.

Instead, four of the ladies in traditional costumes approach the Queen with backs bent nearly double, rising to no more than crouching height, then joining the oblique lines of squatted islanders, softly clapping their delight and warm, friendly welcome.

The qalowaqa then over, the men take up their part in welcoming the Queen.

The men's ceremony of welcome is as vocal as the women's first and more important qalowaqa is silent.

Its master of ceremonies is Ratu George Kadavulevu Cakobau, O.B.E.

The next ceremony of sevusevu, the drinking of the yagona (kava), is exclusively masculine.

The coconut shell from which the Queen drinks has been used for other visiting Royalty. They include the Queen's father, when Duke of York, and her grandfather, George V, when a young midshipman.



RATU (Chief) Sir Lala Sukuna and Lady Sukuna, who feature prominently in ceremonies marking the Queen's Fiji visit.

Today the root of yagona is powdered and mixed with water in front of the distinguished guest. But formerly the root was chewed first by a maiden, spat into the bowl, mixed with water, and offered to the guest of honor.

King George V objected, "First you chew it, then spit it out, then wash your hands in it, then ask me to drink it."

This story has been passed down and cherished by the Fijians, who are still amused at his description.

But they believe it is fatal for the person being honored if he refuses the drink. They maintain that George V's elder brother, the Duke of Clarence, died because of his refusal.

When this ceremony is over, the Queen will be presented with a pile of Fijian handicraft and food, both cooked and uncooked. This is known as vakamaca, that is, articles for daily use.

In this case it includes native barkcloth and wooden spears, eating implements of mother-of-pearl, more whales' teeth, and a large fan from coconut leaves that can be placed over the head to double as an umbrella.

Enough food has been collected in Fiji to victual the Royal yacht for a voyage round the world.

All the cooked food is to go to Gothic, but at the Queen's request the uncooked food is to be distributed among the islanders.

It includes 100 pigs, hundreds of fow (turtle), sackloads of every native root vegetable, long sticks of bananas, hundreds of coconuts, every variety of native fish and crabs.

The native ceremonies for the Queen conclude with the meke when the Fijians bring on their dancing girls in pandanus-leaf grass skirts for the ceremonial dances, which play such a big part in Fijian life and custom.



WHALE'S TOOTH (tambua) as a symbol of friendship is presented by Sir Lala Sukuna to a colonel-commandant of the King's Royal Rifles during a visit to England.



THE QUEEN MOTHER receives Lady Sukuna at a garden party in London during the Coronation season. Lady Sukuna will lead the Fijian women chosen for a formal native ceremony welcoming Queen Elizabeth.



HIGH-BORN FIJIAN Colonel E. T. Cakobau, C.O. of the Fijian battalion in Malaya, photographed during a visit to Sydney. Colonel Cakobau, like most of the men of his family, is an old Oxonian.



# PARKS AND GARDENS ON ROYAL ROUTE



*NURSES' HOME of the Christchurch Public Hospital, New Zealand, seen from Hagley Park, where there are thousands of flowers in 497 acres. The Queen and the Duke will pass the park on their way to visit the hospital.*



*LEFT: Trentham racecourse, 14 miles from Wellington, where the Royal couple will attend a race meeting on January 14.*

*ABOVE: Auckland Domain will be the scene of a special welcome to the Queen on December 24, when 30,000 schoolchildren will rally.*

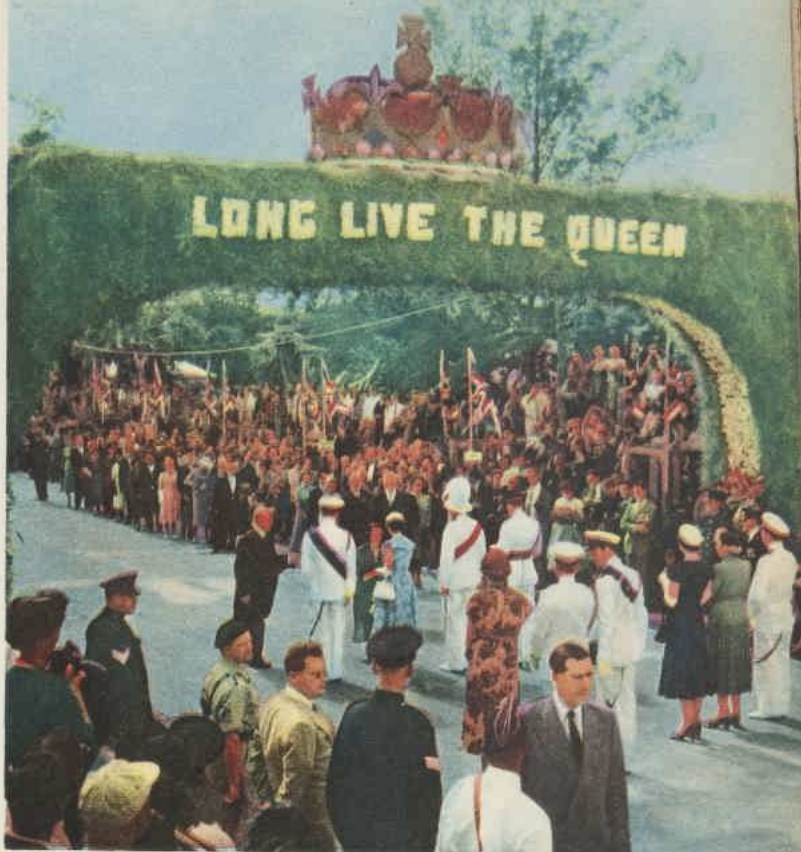




ARRIVAL IN BERMUDA. The Governor of Bermuda, Sir Alexander Hood (in plumed helmet), presents officers to the Queen immediately after she landed from her plane at Kindley Field with the Duke.

## IN BERMUDA . . .

● These pictures of the Queen's visit to Bermuda convey some of the color of the island and the enthusiasm which greeted the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh. It was the first time a reigning British monarch had ever visited Bermuda.



IN BRILLIANT SUNSHINE under an arch of fern and tropical flowers the Queen meets leading citizens of St. George, Bermuda. The Duke of Edinburgh, in uniform, is at left of the Queen.



QUEEN ELIZABETH makes an official visit during her 20-hour stay at Bermuda. Wearing this simply designed printed dress, the Queen, accompanied by the Duke, went by the yacht *Wilhelmina*, across the channel from Hamilton to Ireland Island, seeing the coastline and inspecting the Children's Hospital.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY - December 23, 1953



PRESENTATIONS such as the one above took up the first part of the Queen's visit to Bermuda, "the millionaires' playground." The Queen is wearing a full-skirted dress of printed blue silk.





PRODUCER Laurence Gilliam (right) and engineer Bill Perry check recordings. The Christmas programme will have more "live" sequences than usual.



MEMBERS of A.B.C., B.B.C., and P.M.G. staffs in conference are (from left) Mungo MacCallum, Reg Patrick (front), Alan Burgess, John Antill, Neil Hutchison (back), John Thompson, Laurence Gilliam, and Jack Tait.

# Everest hero to introduce Royal broadcast

## B.B.C. team in Sydney prepares for Christmas programme

By BETTY BEST, staff reporter

Place of honor in the B.B.C.'s world-wide Christmas broadcast this year will go to New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary, who will introduce the Queen's speech from his sister's home in Norfolk, 20 miles from Sandringham.

SIR EDMUND has been chosen not only because of his achievement as the conqueror of Mount Everest but also to honor his country, New Zealand, which Queen Elizabeth will be visiting when she broadcasts to the Empire.

Radio listeners on Christmas Day will hear Her Majesty's voice coming from Government House in Auckland, only a few miles from Sir Edmund's own home.

This year the broadcast, which has an estimated audience of 200,000,000 all over the world, will be unusual in many ways.

For the first time since 1932, when King George V made the inaugural broadcast over the newly arranged Empire Service hook-up, the programme will come from a country outside the United Kingdom.

To Sydney, Australia, from about 30 different points throughout the world, will come the greetings that precede the Queen's speech.

And from the Australian Broadcasting Commission's studios in Sydney those voices will be transmitted to all points of the globe.

Especially powerful equipment, extensively detailed organisation, and split-second timing will be essential for the success of the programme.

To make sure of every detail, a team of specialists from

the British Broadcasting Corporation has come to Sydney to work with the Australian Broadcasting Commission and the New Zealand Broadcasting System.

Since October 1 they have been gathering material, planning sequences, and arranging for the programme.

Now gathered together in a charming house at Seaforth overlooking Sydney's Middle Harbor, they are working on a schedule dictated by cables, conferences, and wave lengths, a schedule which will culminate in 24 hours of non-stop activity just before the broadcast.

### Producer's idea

ENTHUSIASTIC leader of the group is grey-haired, softly spoken Laurence Gilliam, head of the B.B.C. Features Department, who is producing his 20th Christmas programme and was responsible for the suggestion that it should come from Australia.

"It happened rather curiously," he explained through teeth clenched over his inevitable pipe. "We were having a conference about the Royal tour broadcasts and I just said, 'Wouldn't it be fun if we could do the Christmas one from over there?'"

"It wasn't until a couple of weeks later that someone said, 'Well, why not?', and then the fun started."

"I made a rush trip to Australia and New Zealand last May, found that the A.B.C.

were as keen as we were and that their equipment was perfectly suitable for adaptation to world-wide transmission.

"Now we're off on what we feel is a pretty exciting experiment."

"You see, the whole point of this programme is that it is 'live,'" Mr. Gilliam went on.

"What you hear on the air is the actual voice of each speaker as he or she speaks, not just a recorded version."

"Only in emergencies which block wireless channels, like magnetic storms, do we dub in previously recorded rehearsals of the affected sequence."

Tall, fair Alan Burgess, another member of the team, has been with the B.B.C. since 1946 as a producer and writer in the Features Department.

On his way to Australia Mr. Burgess stopped at Pakistan, New Delhi, Madras, Ceylon, Singapore, Hongkong, Penang, Kuala Lumpur, Sarawak, and made a special trip to New Guinea.

At each of these stops he arranged for a representative of the people to take part in the programme.

Mr. Gilliam, on his trip out here, organised the broadcast from Cyprus, Kenya, Rhodesia, South Africa, Mauritius, and Cocos Island.

"The technical boys" of the B.B.C. staff are Reg Patrick, an assistant superintendent engineer, William Perry, senior control-room engineer, and panel operator Charles

Ladbrook, who has been working on the Christmas programme from the beginning.

Reg Patrick, of Guildford, Surrey, has been with the B.B.C. for 28 years and greets all his new technical problems with the same glee as a school-boy with a new gadget.

Charles Ladbrook, short and stocky, is known as Laddie to the boys.

He takes delight in telling the story of one Christmas broadcast. He was at the panel as usual when that year's narrator, Robert Donat, gave him the cue, "Over to Canada."

Laddie turned the knob marked "Canada" and nearly fell off his seat when in came a burst from a full Ukrainian choir singing "Holy Night."

It was part of a propaganda programme being sent from Canada to Russia.

"They'd changed the frequencies at the last moment and we were on the wrong channel," Laddie said. "It gave us all a bit of a start."

The man who has to be on tip-toe for emergencies like this is William Perry, who has already recorded the rehearsals.

He follows the live programme as it goes on, and if necessary quickly dubs in the recorded version without a break in the continuity.

With the accent on Australia in this year's programme, Laurence Gilliam has chosen as the narrator well-known Australian radio commentator and author Chester Wilton.

"We needed someone as well known in England as he is in Australia, and Chester is ideal," Mr. Gilliam said.

Co-producer with Mr. Gilliam is A.B.C. Director of Drama and Features Neil Hutchison, who narrated the Australian contribution in the 1946 Christmas broadcast.

They naturally have a special interest in the Australian sequence, which will be much longer than usual.

It will include a message from veteran bushman Bill Harney, in Darwin, one from Kalgoorlie, in Western Aus-



VETERAN BUSHMAN Bill Harney, of Darwin, and nine-year-old Ian Paterson, of Mudgee, N.S.W., discuss the messages they will give in the Christmas programme.

tralia, and one from a children's party at the Far West Children's Home in Manly, N.S.W.

German-born Syd Loder, as a representative of New Australians, will introduce Australia's final speaker.

This will be nine-year-old Ian Paterson, of Mudgee, N.S.W., who had a severe speech affliction and has learnt to speak especially for the programme.

To complete the Australian atmosphere all the music has been written by Sydney composer John Antill, who will also conduct The Sydney Symphony Orchestra of 50 musicians for the programme.

### Precautions

FOR Queen Elizabeth's personal message, the most extensive precautions of all are taken.

Travelling first by land-line from Auckland to Wellington, it then takes five different routes:

One goes by radio telephone to Sydney, one direct to London, one by broadcast transmitters to Sydney, another direct to the Admiralty, London, by Royal New Zealand Navy transmitter, and yet an-

other across the Pacific to San Francisco, New York, and London.

Sydney in its turn will send the message on by radio telephone and by broadcast transmitter direct to London, and also by way of Ceylon and by way of Singapore.

All these radio paths across the poles and oceans are kept clear by radio engineers, who will spend Christmas Day and many days beforehand at lonely transmitters and relay stations.

Many of them, like the B.B.C. crew in Sydney, are married and have families from whom they will be separated at Christmas.

"We've never spent Christmas quite so far from home before," says Laddie Ladbrook, "but we've no complaints. After all, the Queen is doing the same thing herself this time."

And how will the Queen be feeling about her broadcast?

According to Laurence Gilliam she "takes it in her stride."

"She's the most poised and nerveless speaker," he said. "A natural broadcaster."





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"You go, dear, if you want to. I must finish these things tonight because I have to turn out the sitting-room tomorrow."

"I think it is wonderful how you get everything done, with me and all the children to look after and no maid."

"That's one of the most things you've said to me for a long time, dear—but you know I should never have had the strength if you hadn't made me take those Phyllosan tablets regularly."

"Well, I didn't see why they shouldn't be as good for you as they were for me. The older we get, the harder we both seem to have to work. So let's be thankful there's Phyllosan to help us."

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## The Queen's life story: Final instalment

# IN THE SHADOW OF A THRONE

At the end of 1949, when Princess Elizabeth flew to Malta to join her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, who was stationed there as a Naval officer, she was happy and carefree. Tragedy was still a little way off.

IN Malta Princess Elizabeth stayed at Valetta, in the big white Villa Guardamangia, where she was the guest of Lord and Lady Mountbatten. That year, for the first time in her life, she did not spend Christmas at Sandringham with the other members of the Royal Family.

She stayed on in Malta, and, as Princess Margaret said, "it made her seem more married than anything else."

Early in 1950 Princess Elizabeth returned home, to hug Prince Charles and admire his lovely new blue plush teddy-bear, which still remains his favorite toy.

She must have felt rather lonely, taking up residence in Clarence House without her husband, but there were many Royal duties to claim her time.

One morning in March Princess Elizabeth flew out again to Malta to join the Duke, somewhat to the public's surprise, for she left extremely quietly.

Very soon the reason was revealed in another Court circular, which mentioned "no further public engagements."

So it became known that in the coming August Prince Charles would have a brother or a sister.

The crowds had a special cheer for Princess Elizabeth when on her return to Britain she joined the Royal party at Epsom on Derby Day.

She insisted on being a completely modern mother-to-be and leading a near normal daily life.

Princess Elizabeth's second child did not arrive as early as expected.

"Having finally made up her mind," as the Duke later remarked, the baby daughter was born on the morning of August 15.

"We're giving her a name that nobody can spoil," Princess Elizabeth said later. She had always disliked diminutives and nicknames of any kind.

The baby was named Anne Elizabeth Alice Louise when she was christened on October 21 in the music-room at Buckingham Palace.

The year 1951 brought the beginning of the long series of illnesses which were eventually to end the life of King George VI. But at first there were no shadows for Princess Elizabeth and her little family, and she and her husband again spent the beginning of the year in Malta.

"Such a happy spot," the Princess affectionately described the island, and certainly it gave her an informal privacy she seldom knew. Arm in arm the Royal couple could walk through the streets with

no one taking the slightest notice of them. They dined in little restaurants, went for drives, sat on the cliffs reading detective novels and chatting.

But when the Duke's ship sailed with the rest of the fleet on a spring cruise, the Princess flew home to London and Royal duties.

In May the King had an attack of influenza with complications, and his elder daughter took over his public engagements. In June she acted as her father's deputy at the Trooping the Color, watched from the Palace balcony by Prince Charles, who shouted excitedly, "Look! Mummy's playing soldiers!"

The Duke of Edinburgh, who had paid some flying visits to London, now returned home for the summer holidays. Everyone was looking forward to going to Balmoral that year, because Princess Margaret was to celebrate her 21st birthday there in August and the Royal Family hoped that a long Scottish holiday would complete the King's convalescence, since he still had a cough and seemed far from strong.

Following an old family custom, Princess Margaret had been allowed to choose her birthday treat, and she had asked for a picnic lunch high in the moors. So everyone sat around informally, and when the meal was over the King went

grouse shooting while the ladies walked home and got ready for the dance to be held that evening.

The next morning the King had another heavy cold.

He grew rapidly worse, and soon Princess Elizabeth was hearing that her beloved father had to undergo a major operation.

She and the Duke had been preparing for an official visit to Canada, but now she spent long hours in the sitting-room at the Palace with the Queen and Princess Margaret, reading and helping to answer the letters of sympathy that had poured in from all over the world.

One of the first things the King said when he grew strong enough after his operation was, "Of course you mustn't cancel the tour. People would be so disappointed." So Princess Elizabeth and the Duke flew off from London Airport, with the Queen's promise to phone them every day.

Every day at Clarence House Prince Charles kept in daily touch with his mother and father so far away. Every morning he was shown their pictures in the newspapers, and when he saw one of the Duke in a cowboy hat he shouted with laughter. All that day



THE QUEEN, then Princess Elizabeth, walking with her husband, the Duke of Edinburgh, in the grounds of their first home, Clarence House, before King George VI's death.

as he played in the garden he kept stopping to laugh and exclaim, "Papa in his funny hat!"

Soon the Princess and her husband were home again, bringing boxes of wonderful presents which the warm-hearted people of Canada had sent for the children. Not that Charles and Anne were given them all at once. Their mother was determined they would never be spoiled by over-indulgence. The presents were rationed out, and some were kept for Christmas.

Christmas Day saw the family gathered at Sandringham, where the King was well enough to sit at the head of the table and carve the turkey as usual.

Presently it was decided that Princess Elizabeth and the Duke, such successful Royal representatives across the Atlantic, should undertake the long tour to Africa and Australia, which the King had proposed to make with the Queen before his health had declined.

On the last day in January, 1952, the King and Queen and other members of the Royal Family stood on the roof of a building at London Airport, watching the great silver airliner roaring down the runway and taking the two Royal travellers on the first lap of their journey across the world.

Princess Elizabeth stayed beside the cabin window waving fondly to the last. Little did she imagine she would never see her father again or that in a few days' time, as she lounged in slacks in the African sunshine, her husband would come to her with a suddenly grave face and tell her gently she was now Queen.

So the blue-eyed girl who had once been Lilibet now became Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

Those were busy, responsible days for the young Queen

when, returning from Africa, she took up the duties laid down by her father, the duties for which she had been tutored and trained.

Charles and Anne saw little of their mother at this time, for the Queen had to rearrange her private as well as her public life. She had become head of the Royal Family, and even Princess Margaret had to curtsy when she met her sister and ask whether the Queen could see her before coming into her sitting-room. The Queen had decided the children were as yet too young to have the change in her status explained to them.

"They will learn to understand as they grow older," she said. "Margaret and I did."

But the Queen insisted that she must have some time with her children and she was determined to keep the precious "children's hour" after tea, when she and the Duke played with Charles and Anne.

Eighteen months of being a Sovereign wrought a great change in the young Queen, who grew amazingly in poise and dignity.

Today her clothes are richer looking models, her furs more luxurious, and her jewels the magnificent gems a Queen is expected to wear. Her voice is firmer and her laugh more restrained, though it still rings out delightfully at times. Unlike her ancestor, Queen Victoria, this modern young Queen is often amused.

Ever since her Coronation the Queen has been preparing to meet the peoples of the Commonwealth and has absorbed an enormous amount of detail about the lands she is visiting.

Her blue eyes will shine warmly with gracious friendliness as she meets them—Queen Elizabeth II, who is only 27 years old, yet walks the Monarch of her lands, along the road of incomparable tradition.





**LEAVING THE CHURCH.** Cholmondeley Darvall and his bride, formerly Jennifer Holmes, daughter of the United Kingdom High Commissioner, Sir Stephen Holmes, and Lady Holmes, leave St. John's Church, Canberra.



**WEDDING GUESTS.** Mrs. Jim Rylie (left) and Dierdre Collins at the reception following the Cholmondeley Darvall-Jennifer Holmes wedding at St. John's, Canberra.



**GRADUATION BALL.** Staff Cadet Ian McLellan and attractive Janette Mair at the graduation ball, which was held at the Roy Military College, Duntroon, in Canberra.

## SOCIAL JOTTINGS

**CHRISTMAS** is the time when the very young come into their own, and decorations play a big part in their idea of the festive scene.

In many homes, together with the traditional stocking or pillowcase, one particular ornament takes pride of place. A set of wooden angels, forming an orchestra—conducted by Santa Claus—is set up on the mantelpiece at the Wairoonga home of Mr. and Mrs. David Klippel. They have a ten-year-old daughter, Diane.

There are six Christmas trees in the Tom Bateman's household. Mrs. Bateman tells me that she and her husband bought a big tree after they were married, and they have added a small one for each of their children—Edmund, Rosalind, Beatrice, Anne, Thomas, and Gregory.

Caroline Copeland helps her mother, Mrs. Alan Copeland, sew all their Christmas cards together to decorate their house at Palm Beach.

**CABLE** from England brought Mr. and Mrs. J. S. Cox, of Turramurra, news of the birth of their first grandchild, who is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. John Cramer, of Leeds. The baby will be named Maryanne, and with her parents will leave England in March to visit Australia. Dr. Cramer is the son of Mr. J. O. Cramer, M.H.R., and Mrs. Cramer, of Wollstonecraft.

**GWENDA RILEY**, of Rose Bay, flew up to Darwin to be bridesmaid when Joan Lysaght and Norman Brunskill were married there last month. Norman and Joan, who is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Lysaght, of Double Bay, are planning to motor down to Sydney for a holiday early next year.



**BETWEEN DANCES.** Margot McKendry and Greg Cox were among guests at the dance given by thirty-eight hostesses who have just completed their third year at Kumbala School, Rose Bay. Margot wore a black-and-white spotted organza frock.

IT will be a gay party when five ex-Cranbrook boys combine to give a pre-Christmas, end-of-school dance at Sherbrooke, Double Bay, on December 21. The hosts are Peter Gregory, Graeme Nott, Warwick Penn, Brian Jones, and Andrew Rogers.

**BRIEFLY** . . . Cocktail party given by Mr. and Mrs. A. G. MacDonald at their home, "Rassville," Goulburn, was in honor of their daughter, Noeline, who has just passed her nursing finals.

**WHEN** they reach Australia, letters from Mrs. Charles Corry in London go the rounds of her three sisters—Mrs. Geoffrey Remington, of Wollstonecraft; Mrs. David Murray, of Burwood; and Mrs. Graham Body, of "Utopia," Graman. The latest letter brings news that Mrs. Corry's son, Robert Wardlaw, has just graduated from Sandhurst, and that Robert's sister Jane is back at her job in the Foreign Office after a holiday in France.

Anne



**YOUNG HOSTESSES.** From left, Jenny Donkin, Sue Austin, Janet Beveridge, Frances Drummond, and Jan Bart were among ten hostesses who gave a combined end-of-school and pre-Christmas dance at Florida House.



**AT THE PICKWICK CLUB.** Peter Baldwin, his sister, Helen (centre), and Diane Ritchie at the Christmas dance given by young host and hostess, Charmaine Simpson, of "Maxwellton," Nyngan, and John Campbell, of Walgett. Helen's pretty frock was made of tulle and satin.



**ENGAGED.** Sonia Miller and Bill Durham at their engagement party held at the Bellevue Hill home of Sonia's mother, Mrs. C. H. K. Miller. Sonia's ring is a diamond solitaire.



**CUTTING THE CAKE.** Dr. John Excell and his bride, formerly Ratti Champion, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Champion, at the reception at Glen Ascham following their wedding at St. Mark's Church, Darling Point.





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# OIL AS GREEN AS DOLLARS



SVEN PETERSEN, cook-steward at the base camp at Learmonth, Western Australia, hangs out the tablecloths. The base camp is 25 miles from the oil-drilling site.



ASBESTOS-LINED HUT, typical of those in which oil drillers are housed. The huts are screened against flies and bolted down to protect them from cyclones.



CARSON BURNSIDE, nicknamed "Torchy," who was the first driller to see the oil which has been found at Exmouth Gulf. He was on duty when the oil was discovered.

## Find in West may be Fairy Godmother for the Cinderella State

I flew nearly 3000 miles from Sydney to the north-west of Western Australia to see the first Australian oil, the stuff that has caused the most feverish activity on Australian stock exchanges for a generation. I saw it in a small tank at Rough Range Number One Bore, on the shores of Exmouth Gulf. With the sunlight shining on it, it was a greenish color, the color of worn pound notes.

IT might remind some people of the color of dollar bills, because it was American capital that finally found oil in Australia. In either case the color is appropriate, because the excitement in Western Australia resembles that of a family which has suddenly come into a fortune but hasn't yet heard the full details from its lawyers.

The analogy isn't quite exact, but there is the same speculation about the income to be expected from the new riches and how they may change the pattern of everyday life.

Flying up the west coast from Perth, looking down on the great stretches of lonely red country with its yellow spinifex, its saltbush, and its mangrove fringes, I thought of Edna Ferber's novel "Giant," with its story of the huge wealth oil brought to Texas.

It's a picture that cannot be truly reflected in Australia, because oil-producing land does not bring wealth to the landholders.

Petroleum rights are vested in the Crown. The State will draw royalties from profits of petroleum leases which it grants, but landholders will be entitled only to compensation. Nevertheless, if Australia's first oil well fulfils its hopes, December, 1953, sees the approach of the end of one chapter and the beginning of another.

Sitting in the MacRobertson Miller DC3 that took us to Carnarvon, I was glad to have

a glimpse of the West that may soon be the Old West.

Coming into money sometimes changes character as well as habits, and one couldn't help feeling sorry if anything changed the easy-going, friendly ways of Western people. People yarned with one another, and a man bound for Derby helped the pretty

which differs in construction from a derrick, so I learned later in the day, but derrick is the word which conveys a picture to the layman.)

We swung back south and came in over Learmonth, an airstrip and a cluster of small white buildings a couple of miles from the sea.

From the air you can see round the strip the outlines of aircraft-dispersal bays, a reminder of the fact that this was once an R.A.A.F. strip.

The excitement of the outside world has proved a source of some embarrassment to the oilmen. Naturally, they were pleased to find oil. It is gratifying to see some result for the work which goes with the expenditure of a million pounds, but visitors dropping out of the sky are inclined to complicate a job of this kind.

Nevertheless, the field superintendent of the West Australian Petroleum Company, Mr. M. D. Kemp, a Canadian known as "Doc" because of his initials, showed us round with courtesy and patience. "Showing around" at Learmonth takes some time and transport, for 25 miles of red, dusty road separate the base and the drill site.

To the base camp, managed by a 28-year-old Australian from Perth, Jan Hosking, who served in the Navy during the war, come the supplies by air, road, and sea.

At night it was strange to hear in such an outpost the rattle of a ship unloading.

It was the Kybra, which brings supplies from Perth every few weeks. Because of the shallow waters, the anchors half a mile out in the Gulf and barges bring in their loads



hostess with the washing-up, a usual occurrence on this line.

In the plane and at Geraldton and Carnarvon everyone talked oil.

"It will be a great thing for the Cinderella State," they all said, for Westerners traditionally feel neglected by the East.

"We will be patronising you Easterners before we finish," said one man happily.

After we left Carnarvon in an Anson to fly the last 150 miles of the 200-mile journey, the sight of a road was an event. Below us was the treeless spinifex landscape, which is engraved on the memories of thousands of servicemen.

As we reached Exmouth we came in low and circled.

There below us was the derrick which has become the focus of a continent's attention. (Correctly it is a mast,

to a mangrove-bordered tidal reach.

Hosking, besides managing the camp, operates the radio, which connects Learmonth with the outside world, a world which in his six months at Learmonth he hasn't regretted leaving.

"People look at this area and call it desolate," he said. "All it needs is water, and there is plenty of water under the ground. It looks dry, but it will grow plenty besides spinifex."

"Up at North-west Cape, at the lighthouses, they grow all their own vegetables. They even grow roses. There is any amount of interest here. Wonderful fishing, and the country abounds with animals—kangaroos, emus, and foxes."

Not all the men may feel as enthusiastic about the north-west, but they are comfortably housed in lined asbestos huts, shuttered against the dust blown by the incessant winds and screened against flies.

Besides having excellent food and living conditions, they are all making good money. There are few of them who, including overtime, make less than £25 a week, and their keep is free.

Lately there has been one all-pervading topic of talk—the price of shares. Nearly every worker has bought shares.

The 20 men who live at the base camp are nearly all Australians.

At the drill site on Rough Range there are about 50 men, 14 of them Americans. The drillers and drillers' assistants are Americans; employees of the Brown Drilling Company of California, which contracted to do the job for West Australian Petroleum Ltd.

From the drilling platform you can see the sea in the distance. Above rises the derrick, dominating the low treeless hills that are Rough Range. At night it is a column of light in wide surrounding darkness, a symbol of the changes that may be wrought in this country by the oil that lies 3500ft. below.



DRILLING RIG at Rough Range No. 1, showing oil-sludge pool in the background. The derrick towers above the desolate country in which the oil was found.



# Dress Sense for the Royal Tour

By BETTY KEEP

**Every Australian woman unused to Royal occasions will want to know what is the right thing to wear to events at which the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will be present.**

**A**LTHOUGH the Queen has said that she does not want men or women to buy special clothes for her visit, there are rules to be observed.

We asked Norman Hartnell, dressmaker to the Royal Family, to give us the fashion etiquette for such occasions.

Mr. Hartnell says, "At a formal evening reception, a floor-length, décolleté evening gown should be worn with long gloves."

"The Queen has broken the tradition of white gloves made in kid. She prefers sometimes to wear gloves in fabric, because she considers them smarter and easier to keep clean than skin gloves."

"The gloves need not be shoulder high,

and it is permissible to have them tinted to match a dress. Gloves contrasting in color to a colored dress are not correct; nor are mittens.

"Gloves should be left on during the reception."

"It is not correct to wear black in the Queen's presence, unless for some reason special permission has been asked for and granted."

Mr. Hartnell suggests pastel-colored evening gowns for those who will meet the Queen.

Tiaras may be worn to any function the Queen attends if the invitation calls for white ties for men. If it specifies black ties, tiaras are not worn, since the Queen may be bareheaded.

For a garden-party ensemble, "Michael" and John Cavanagh, two well-known London dress-designers, suggest the following:

Light-textured silk tailored suits for young marrieds, and light-colored organza or any other diaphanous material for debutante dresses.

Satins and too-heavy crepes are not suitable for an Australian summer.

The traditional wide-brimmed garden-party hat is only worn when it can be anchored to the head without any "clutching."

A smaller hat is better fashion and makes a curtsy easier to perform.

Curtsying is of such importance that women should have dresses cut so that the skirts will always fall gracefully. Nothing looks worse than a curtsy performed in a too-tight skirt.

Elbow-length gloves are correct with afternoon and garden-party ensembles if the dress has short sleeves.

**WOMEN** who will be on a platform receiving the Queen should always choose their dresses so that they will be merely a background for the Queen's clothes. Discreet styles in soft colors are correct.

For luncheon and morning functions darker colors are permissible but never dark gloves. Light or white gloves are correct on these occasions, and the length can be anything from wrist to elbow, according to the design of the dress.

During hot weather a cool sheer material is often a better choice than a heavy-surfaced silk or rayon. A cotton weave can be just as lovely and as formal as any silk.

For late-afternoon receptions the correct fashion is a cocktail dress, cocktail hat, and gloves.

At special race meetings which the Queen will attend during the tour, and at which men wear topers and morning suits, women will feel it is necessary to be more formally dressed. Instead of a suit most women, in compliment to the Queen, will wear—weather permitting—a garden-party ensemble.

The dresses at the left are selected for their suitability for formal functions and less formal occasions during the tour.

**FOOTNOTE:** Yellow is one of the colors which appears frequently for day and night in the Queen's tour wardrobe. It is a clear cool color specially chosen for hot weather.

## N.Z. ROYAL TOUR



**FOR DAYTIME events.** This elegant ensemble (above) consists of a tailored one-piece dress and matching jacket worn with a small hat and classic pull-on gloves.

**FOR HOT DAYS.** A discreet cotton print in honey color (right) has a white accent on the bodice to match a white pique turban and long-handled parasol.

**GARDEN-PARTY or cocktail dress (left)** is worn with a tiny matching hat and white elbow-length gloves. Note unusual shawl bodice design.





• Here are three model dresses and two hats from the Royal tour wardrobe of Lady Alice Egerton, Lady-in-Waiting to the Queen. The dresses were designed by Adele Delanghe and the hats by Madame Vernier; all are light for flying and travelling through the tropics. They are modelled by mannequins.



FLOWERS, fruit, and moss-green velvet are combined for the hat (above). The hat is Lady Egerton's choice to wear for Royal tour race meetings and on to cocktails.



SUMMERY evening gown (above) made in a flowered and bird-patterned mousseline. The dress has a wide, graceful skirt and low-cut, moulded bodice-top finished with narrow self-material straps.

GARDEN PARTY HAT (left) is designed to stay firmly on the head. Made in fine, white, frothy straw, it is lined with shell-pink and trimmed with a single long-stemmed pink rose and green leaves.

TWO MODELS (right) are designed for formal occasions. The red lace gown has a wide matching velvet hemline. The violet dress in the foreground is spattered with diamante.





# LOVELY HOMES FOR THE QUEEN AND DUKE

● Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh will take two brief holidays when they stay at comfortably appointed homes in New Zealand.



**N.Z.  
ROYAL  
TOUR**



ENTRANCE HALL at "Longbeach," home of Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Grigg, in the South Island. The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will have three days' rest here, from January 22 to January 25. The house is the fourth to be built on the estate.



BALCONY overlooking the grounds opens off the Queen's bedroom at "Longbeach." During their stay here the Queen and the Duke hope to become familiar with New Zealand farming methods. The Queen will attend a service in the family chapel.



SITTING-ROOM AT "LONGBEACH." This room overlooks green lawns and an artificial lake, the home of countless wild duck. Mr. and Mrs. Grigg will occupy the manager's house when Queen Elizabeth and the Duke of Edinburgh stay at "Longbeach."

THE Queen and the Duke will have a five-day rest from their official duties when they go to "Moose Lodge," home of Mr. and Mrs. Noel Cole, at Lake Rotoiti, North Island, on New Year's Day.

Later in the New Zealand tour they will spend another short holiday at "Longbeach," a 3000-acre farm owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Grigg at Ashburton, in the mid-Canterbury area, South Island.

"Moose Lodge" is set in 16 acres of grounds. A half-mile-long concrete drive lined with poplar and prunus trees and small New Zealand ferns leads from the main road to the house, which stands on a knoll. Lawns and gardens slope to the lake's edge.

Near the lodge is a small white beach where the Royal couple will be able to swim in private.

The Queen and the Duke will also have the chance of catching some of the famous Rotorua rainbow trout. They may even land one of the larger ones—a fifteen pounder or more.

A launch will be ready for the use of the Royal guests.

Lunch will probably be served out-of-doors. At "Moose Lodge" it is usually eaten on the beach.

The meal is prepared in barbecue style and served in a magnificently carved "whare kai," or Maori eating-house.

The "whare" is built of totare, a New Zealand wood second in value only to the renowned New Zealand kauri wood. The Maori carvings on the "whare" are some of the finest produced by this race famous for its carvings.

The tranquil bay where the

"whare" is situated is named Tuapuaakura—Maiden's Footsteps.

The "whare kai" is dedicated to the late Sir Peter Buck, who spent many holidays at "Moose Lodge." His Maori name "Te Rangi Hiroa," together with the Maori welcome word, "Haere mai," is on the entrance door.

Sir Peter was a half-caste Maori and one of New Zealand's greatest scientists. At the time of his death in 1951 he was director of the Bishop Museum at Honolulu.

The "Lodge" is heated by electricity. One hundred electric motors are installed, and even Bonza, the house dog of uncertain parentage, has an electrically warmed kennel.

Three magnificent mounted moose heads are near the front entrance. Dr. Rayner, a Canadian, who built the "Lodge," was an enthusiastic hunter. He built "hunters' bedrooms" so that the men could rise early in the morning without disturbing the rest of the household.

The Queen's and the Duke's bedrooms have full-length windows with easterly and northerly aspects and are light and sunny nearly all day long. Separate bathrooms and dressing-rooms are attached.

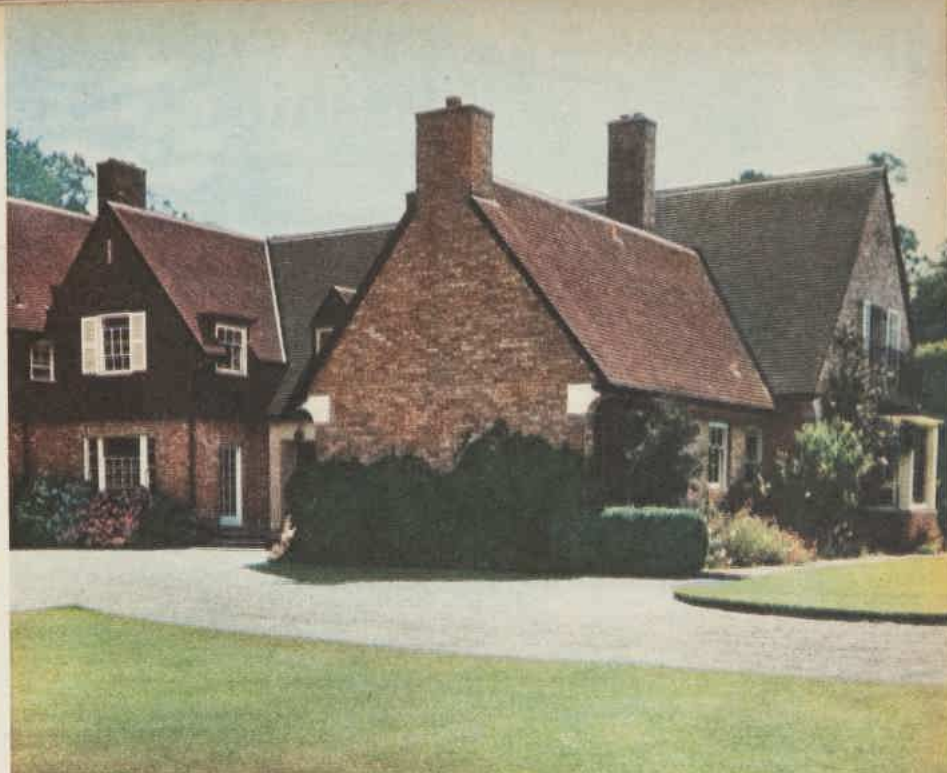
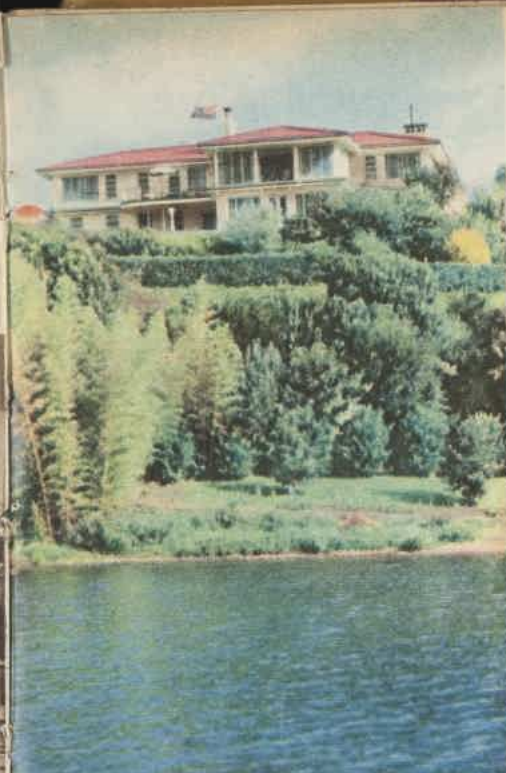
Two-storied, the "Lodge" has a billiard and dance room, a games room, and two double bedrooms on the lower floor. The second floor consists of an imposing entrance hall, sitting-room, dining-room, sun-deck, modern spacious kitchen, the suites which the Royal couple will use, and two other bedrooms.

Members of the staff live in attractive, modern cottages on the estate.

After leaving the "Lodge," Queen Elizabeth will have no time to relax until she goes to the South Island to stay at "Longbeach."

"Longbeach" is one of the finest landed estates in the Dominion, and





the story of its growth is one of the most stirring chapters in New Zealand's history.

Its founder was John Grigg, who was born in Cornwall, England, in 1828 and came to New Zealand in 1854. In 1861 he travelled to the South Island and purchased a vast tract of land. No one had ventured into the area before, and much of it was impenetrable swamp.

John Grigg set to work to drain the wilderness and make it produce. He built his own brick kiln and made drain-pipes. He cut ditches from 2ft. to 14ft. deep, all leading to the Hinds River. He laid 150 miles of drains!

Gradually the estate was developed into the largest agricultural farm in the world, and when John Grigg died in 1901 the property passed to his son, Mr. J. C. N. Grigg.

The present owner is Mr. J. H. Grigg, who inherited "Longbeach" in 1926.

The homestead is set in several acres of lawns, gardens, and shrubs, and ringed by many trees which were planted when the estate was first settled.

A broad drive leads to the red-brick homestead, nearby are a lily pond and an artificial lake that are a haven for wild duck during the shooting season.

The lake is fed by a stream winding through the trees and gardens, spanned here and there by rustic bridges. Thousands of goldfish swim about in the clear water.

One of the bridges leads to a secluded corner of the grounds, where a small wooden church stands in the shade of huge sycamores, Australian gum trees, and laurels.

The church is almost as old as the estate itself, having been brought to the farm by bullock-wagon in 1872 and used as a place of worship by successive families of Griggs and their employees.

The homestead, which will be used by the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh, and their personal staff, has an atmosphere of cool comfort, without ostentation. It is a home rather than a show place.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Cole and Mr. and Mrs. Grigg will vacate their homes so that the Queen and her husband will have complete privacy.

"MOOSE LODGE" (left), at Lake Rotoiti, which has been made available by Mr. and Mrs. Noel Cole for the Royal couple's visit. The Queen and the Duke will spend five days at this beautiful lakeside house.

"LONGBEACH," in mid-Canterbury, in the South Island, where the Queen and the Duke will stay from January 22 to January 25. The gabled house and the property are owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. H. Grigg.



SITTING-ROOM at "Moose Lodge" (left), simply but comfortably furnished. The big windows look out over the calm blue waters of Lake Rotoiti.

THE QUEEN'S BEDROOM at "Moose Lodge" (above). A Canadian, Dr. Rayner, built the lakeside house about 30 years ago as a fine hunting lodge.



POLLY HETA, a Maori woman who has been employed at the "Lodge" for 15 years. The door is an example of the best Maori carving in New Zealand.



TRANQUIL VIEW from the sun balcony of "Moose Lodge" with the lake in the foreground. Trout fishing, both fly and trolling, boating, and bathing are the main outdoor attractions. The lodge stands in 16 acres of well-kept grounds.



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YOUTH SERIES by Kay Melaun

## Fashions men like

Whether women dress to please men, themselves, or other women is an old question, and every girl is entitled to her own opinion about it.

But if you want to dress to please men, you'll be wasting time by quizzing the men in your life about it.

IT'S a mistake in tactics to inquire too closely of THE man. (After all, why deliver yourself gagged and bound into his hands?) About the only ones safely available are your brother, your father, your cousin, or the boy you've practically grown up with.

And they, like 99 out of every 100 men in the world, will be no help in this regard.

Men have only the vaguest notion of style details. They're up there with those who don't know - a - thing - about - art - but-know-what-they-like.

But they often astonish by accurately dubbing something old-fashioned or dated.

This is not because they study styles and New Looks. It's because unless they're out-and-out morons they become aware of the changes.

So don't imagine that you can get away with corny dressing. The He in your life will know if you haven't caught on to fashion trends, because you won't look "right" to him.

And he'll like you to look "right." Men are so maddeningly conventional. However—and this is where the trouble starts—they resist change.

Show them a picture of any new fashion and their instinctive reaction is an explosive NO. But as soon as they meet the fashion along the street or at parties and such, they get used to it and begin to judge it objectively and according to how it looks on individual girls.

Generally speaking, he'll like the dressing that makes a pretty frame for you, regardless of Dior.

If a girl with shapely legs wears a short dress, a man

will like a short dress. If a girl with a knobby backbone and a chicken chest goes in for the bare-topped look, he'll say bare tops are awful.

And how right he is.

There's always the odd man out who objects to some particular fashion and will carry his objection with him to the grave.

This one might dislike high wedge shoes ("Makes you look club-footed"), or red nail-polish ("Ugh, those dripping claws"), or feathered hats ("How bird-brain can you get?"), but these are individual pet peeves.

Again generally speaking,

### A bachelor's opinion :

#### OVERDOING CHRISTMAS

I'M tired of girls who think that the Christmas holiday period is simply a time for a merry-go-round of parties and celebrations.

And there are a lot of other bachelors who think this way, too.

The joie-de-vivre, lots-of-fun-and-nonsense approach is fine, but when it's overdone it can involve drinking too much. And few sights disgust the average man so much as a girl who's had too much to drink.

Girls needn't be so surprised to find that many men would rather spend most of the Christmas holiday time quietly, perhaps with their parents, families, and old friends whom they see little enough of during the rest of the year.

men don't like high-fashion clothes. The Adam in them inclines them to prefer to concentrate on the curves inside the apparel.

For instance, many men are resisting the barrel coat line.

In a family I know, the girls happen to have good figures with neat waists. Their men's emphatic thumbs-down on this very practical style was so emphatic that it influenced the girls to get waisted summer suits. The men felt that the barrel line would be cheating them of the tapered waists.

This attitude won't stop the

same men from turning in the street for another view of a girl in a barrel coat—IF Miss Barrel Coat's other attractions are obvious.

THE average man wants a girl to look feminine. And never forget that feminine is the opposite of masculine.

He likes her to emphasise her femininity by her clothes.

Being a man means he's going to be irritated by women's goings-on. But he would rather be irritated by goings-on about perfume and ribbons and matching lace and jangling bracelets than irritated by her settling for brogues and an ultra-sensible suit.

This doesn't mean that you must make a sacrificial fire of your shorts, slacks, and jeans.

When your men "hate" you in slacks, they've probably got good reason.

Perhaps the pants enlarge your charms without enhancing them, as Beverley Nichols once remarked of shorts on women.

Perhaps the pants extinguish you as a woman.

Perhaps you irritate the boys by inappropriately wearing slacks at parties.

VERY few boys like to go out with a girl at whom everyone stares. Every boy likes to be seen with a girl at whom most people take a second look.

In explanation: There is an element of astonishment and disapproval in the stare, whereas the second look is wholly flattering.

In fact, your boy-friend's chest measurement is often the gauge of your success with clothes.

Next time you're aware that the general public is discreetly appreciating the way you look, take a sideways glance at your escort and watch the triumphant expansion of that chest.

on the reverse: "This Is A Very Special Day." Both numbers will be heard in the new version of "The Jazz Singer."

AFTER several years of recording pops and musicals, M.G.M. makes its first bid for the carriage trade with a really magnificent 12-inch LP of the soundtrack from the film "Julius Caesar." It's a must for everyone who appreciates the spoken word and the drama. The play is virtually complete and it's a thrilling experience. You'll hear all the stars of the film, with acting honors going to John Gielgud, but you'll probably agree that the highlight is Marlon Brando's delivery of the "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" speech.

—BERNARD FLETCHER

### DISC DIGEST

afraid the fault lies with G.G. It's not one of his best tunes, but Heath puts all he's got into it. The flip is much more fun: that irresistible number "Hot Toddy." Even if your bunnions are like beetroot, you'd just have to dance to this one.

COLE PORTER is represented this week with a really terrific recording of "Just One Of Those Things." Although Peggy Lee is the vocalist, you'll doff your chapeau to Gordon Jenkins' orchestra for its fast-paced playing that matches to a T the flippant lyrics. To show her versatility, Peggy sings one of her own compositions

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# Siamese survivor



FIRST PICTURE of the surviving Siamese twin, Boko, in Hammersmith Hospital, London, after the operation which separated her from her sister, Tomtutanye.

## Mother had faith that both babies would live

By PATRICIA ROLFE, of our London staff

The day before the operation on her Siamese twin babies Mrs. Veronica Davies went shopping in London. Mrs. Davies, 24-year-old wife of a Nigerian clerk, had brought her 16-weeks-old babies to London two weeks before the operation to separate them.

AFTER the operation Wariboko (whose name means "She who will bring her parents greatness") survived but Tomtutanye ("The will of God") died.

For the shopping expedition Mrs. Davies went with a woman guide to Oxford Street.

She visited several shops before she saw what she wanted — two small white dresses smocked in blue.

She bought them and put them in a brown bag in the room of the students' hostel in Bayswater where she was living.

These simple purchases show more than any words could the simple, unshakable confidence of Veronica Davies.

She behaved throughout the ordeal with calmness, dignity, and touching simplicity.

She accepted the heartbreak of the loss of one of her babies and turned immediately to guard the welfare of the surviving one, Boko.

Mrs. Davies stayed by Boko's bedside until the doctors would fall ill.

Alongside the curly-haired, wide-eyed baby was a penguin doll and at the head of the cot on a railing were a crucifix, a rosary, and a rattle.

Mrs. Davies' demeanor would be remarkable in almost any woman, but is even more so in a woman who travelled several thousand miles into a completely new environment to undergo her ordeal.

She had to go shopping almost immediately after her arrival in London.

Although Londoners are boasting about the mildness of their autumn, it was much colder than anything Mrs. Davies had experienced in Nigeria.

She went off and bought a coat and other woollens.

Practically her first trip out in London was to Westminster Cathedral. She is a devout Catholic.

She also asked to see the lights of Piccadilly and Trafalgar Square at night, so she was taken on an expedition to see them.

She has now travelled by bus, tube, and taxi, but is always accompanied.

She has also visited the zoo at Regent's Park.

Veronica Davies had never flown or been out of her country before she brought her babies to London.

Until shortly before the birth of the twins, her first children, she worked as a cosmetics saleswoman at the United Africa stores at Kano in Northern Nigeria.

Her husband is a clerk with the same company.

Kano is a fair-sized town, but most of the dwellings are mud huts. However, Mr. and Mrs. Davies live in a small wooden bungalow.

They both speak English.

It was the United Africa Company which brought Mrs. Davies to London, and has looked after her since. The British Council provided her accommodation.

As soon as the color and sound film of the operation was processed a copy was sent to Holland, where another set of Siamese twins is awaiting operation. They are the first set in Holland's history.

It is reported they are in a much more favorable condition for operation, because their internal systems are not connected and the separation will involve cutting minor blood vessels and nerves.

The man who made the film of the operation, Stanley Schofield, himself has twin daughters, Margaret and Jean, who are 20.

This is the third time it has been reported that Siamese twins have been successfully parted — the first time was, surprisingly, in Nigeria, and the second only recently in New Orleans, U.S.A.

However, Professor Ian Aird, who performed the operation, stressed that little is still known about the after-effects, and that the area and position of the joins varied greatly.

Although this operation meant the loss of one baby, the separation was successfully made, and it means that one child may look forward to a normal life.

There is still a great deal to learn about the operation, but the world has come a long way from Eng and Chang, the original Siamese twins who spent all their lives as circus freaks.

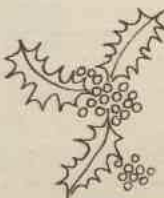
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# Happy marriage contest closes soon

The Christmas holidays will provide a last chance for writing your Happy Marriage Contest entries. The contest closes on December 31.

HERE are this week's progress awards.

**SECTION 1  
BEST ADVICE TO MARRIED COUPLES FROM ANYBODY**  
FOR the theme of my advice I have borrowed this quotation:

"In perfect wedlock, the man, I should say, is the head, but the woman the heart, with which he cannot dispense."

The woman embodies the medium through which infinite happiness can be attained—her good fortune in being born a female. Her body can be soft and alluring. Her voice can be soft and sweet, and, above all, her thoughts and actions can be affectionate and generous.

Now man. Man is clothed in a body of sinew and muscle... a body made for earning and toiling... a body made to rule and conquer. How then can a man allow his body to submit to his heart?

Men are really quite sentimental, but they cannot indulge in sentiment. It is the woman, therefore, who should be the balancing factor.

£5 progress award to Mrs. Sylvia Monk, 48 Kedron Ave., Mitchelton, Brisbane.

## SECTION 2 BEST ADVICE FOR HUSBANDS FROM A WIFE

**DEAR Husband,**— Looking back, do you remember the efforts you made to stand high in the esteem of one particular girl? When it was impossible to be dressed up, you determined that your manners and speech should

single you out for her as the one she would wish to share her life with.

You grew to respect, then to love, each other. Marriage brought to light some differences of opinion, but by facing things squarely you established an understanding and sympathy that has lasted all your married life.

If at times you feel some dissatisfaction with your mate, try to see that it is your own judgment you are doubting.

Always try to remember the efforts you made to please her early in your acquaintance, and aspire to live up to that standard, not just in company but at all times.

£5 progress award to Mrs. A. K. Harrison, 71 Chidlow St., Northam, W.A.

## SECTION 3 BEST ADVICE FOR WIVES FROM A HUSBAND

I AM just an ordinary working husband and have been married seven years and have four children. And I wouldn't swap my wife and children for a king's ransom.

I live, work, and breathe for them—because they can't do enough for dad. It sure makes a fellow proud to come home from work to a loving wife and children who are looking forward to you coming home.

I was married when 31 and my wife was 24, and I believe if we both live to be a hundred we'll never regret it.

Understanding, unselfishness, and love are all that are needed. It's a lot to ask for, but it can be done. No money troubles. Eat well, clothe well, and, if any over, spit it up and put it in the bank.

I served for 5½ years in the war and wasn't married then. My mates always came first in those days, but it's all different now.

My advice for a married woman is to love your man, go out of your way to do little things for him, and he'll love, honor, and obey, and wash-up for you for the rest of your life.

£5 progress award to Mr. O. E. Banfield, 26 William St., Reidtown, via Wollongong, N.S.W.



**WEDDING-DAY PICTURE** wins a £5 progress award for Mrs. A. J. Gedye, of Orchard Grove, Blackburn, Victoria. Mrs. Gedye was married on March 29, 1950.

## THE PRIZES

The prizemoney of £2500 in our Happy Marriage Contest is made up as follows:

£1000 for the best entry in the contest.  
£250 each for the best entry in the four sections. Total £1000.

£50 each for the second best entry in the sections. Total £200.

£25 each for the third best entry in the sections. Total £100.

PROGRESS AWARDS for entries published during the course of the contest. Total £200.  
GRAND TOTAL £2500.

★ Here are the full details of each of the four sections of the contest:

1. Best advice to married couples from anybody.
2. Best advice for husbands from a wife.
3. Best advice for wives from a husband.
4. Most charming wedding group picture.

## CONTEST RULES

ADDRESS your entries "Happy Marriage Contest," The Australian Women's Weekly, Box No. 222, G.P.O., Sydney. You may send in as many entries as you like, but each must be accompanied by a separate coupon.

Put your name and address in block letters at the top of each page of your entry. Write on one side of the paper only. Written entries may be as short as you like, but should not exceed 250 words.

Copyright in all entries shall belong to Consolidated Press Ltd. Entries in the written sections will not be returned. They will be destroyed after the contest.

All entries will be taken with photographs, which will be returned after the contest, but no responsibility can be taken for any damage or loss.

Prizes will be awarded in accordance with the judges' views of the relative merits of the entries received.

No correspondence will be entered into regarding the judges' decisions.

Employees of Consolidated Press Ltd. and its subsidiary companies are not eligible to enter the contest. Nor are their husbands, wives, parents, children, brothers, or sisters.

Finalists of sections two, three, and four will be asked to sign an affidavit of eligibility.

## HAPPY MARRIAGE CONTEST

December 23, 1953. Paste one coupon on each entry. I warrant that the accompanying entry is my own original work. (This does not apply to section 4.)

I accept the conditions of entry and agree that the judges' decision will be final.

Signature (Mr., Mrs., or Miss) \_\_\_\_\_

Address (block letters) \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_

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## Continuing . . . Serenade Your Lady

from page 7

troubadour for us Juan went to visit his fair Maria.

"He's serious this time," said Emilio to me. "A pity she's old enough to be his mother. But perhaps it's not a bad thing after all. The way money slips through Juan's fingers, a wife with a good income will be very handy for him."

A couple of days later Juan burst upon us with the news we were expecting.

"Congratulations me, my friends. I am going to get married. Tomorrow."

We protested. "Tomorrow! But my dear Juan if you get married tomorrow we cannot be there. You know it's the end of the half year and we can't possibly get away from the office."

Juan appeared quite crestfallen. "Oh, a pity! But it can't be helped. Besides, it will be a very quiet wedding, and you really won't miss so much."

There was no time to buy a wedding present, so Emilio and I sat down and each wrote him a cheque. Juan thanked us heartily, and lost no time in cashing them.

It was the night Pachuca had promised to give me my answer. Never had Juan sung so well or with such heart-rending pathos. And little Pachuca leaned over the balcony, the stars shining on her hair and tears shining in her eyes.

"Pachuca, beloved, what is my answer? Is it to be Emilio, or is it to be me?"

And she sighed gently and whispered: "Such a voice I could not resist. I will marry you, Angel."

Oh, what ecstasy! I could scarce believe it true. So overjoyed was I by my success that I hardly noticed poor Emilio's long face, and never once next day did I think of Juan and his stout Maria.

I was lying on the bed in blissful contemplation of all the delights in store for me when Emilio burst into the room, and seizing me by the shoulders shook me violently to and fro.

"Get up, get up!" he shouted. "That two-timing son of Lucifer! That double-crossing dog! Get up!"

What on earth was he talking about? I stared at him in bewilderment. Had he gone suddenly mad?

"Don't you know? Juan has married Pachuca."

Now I knew he was mad. "Impossible, Pachuca is going to marry me."

"It's certainly impossible that she is going to marry you. She has married Juan. The lying scoundrel! And he's already cashed my cheque!" He threw up his hands.

I began to tremble with anger. How he had fooled me, that deceiver! Taking money from me for his services and laughing with her about it behind my back! The little deception I had practised upon Emilio was forgotten and I thought only of Juan's treachery in the matter. Bitterly I told Emilio about it.

"Ha, that's a joke, that is," Emilio said. "I did the same myself. I'd given him half a month's salary to sing better for me than for you. Told me he'd always leaned a bit my way and would be delighted to help me all he could. Mustn't let poor old Angel get to hear of it, though!"

Oh, the perfidy of the creature! The longer I dwelt on it the angrier I became, until the only thing that could satisfy me would be to make of Pachuca a widow before Juan had had a chance to enjoy the fruits of his treachery.

But somehow or other Emilio thwarted this little plan

by getting me so luddled that I completely blacked-out, and when I came to my senses a couple of days later I found myself being desperately seasick on a vessel bound for the United States.

And so I returned to my country after eleven long years and saw Juan and Emilio walking in the streets of San Elias. I gave myself a night to reflect on the past and also to think about one or two things in the present, and by the morning had concluded that perhaps I didn't have such a hatred for Juan as I thought I'd been nursing all these years.

I wondered how things had gone since my enforced departure had put me out of touch with them, and it seemed quite an idea to call at that hotel on Paseo San Juan and look them up.

What a surprise they got when I walked in on them! They bombarded me with questions, never waiting to listen

By the saints, was there no end to these surprises! That so many changes could come about in eleven years!

"We found we had so much in common," said Emilio with a grin. "Besides," he whispered apologetically in my ear, "she had the wine saloon, after all."

"And we have a bride for you, too, Angel," said Juan. "She's been waiting for you all these years. To think that one night could have inspired a woman to such fidelity!"

Light footsteps were tripping down the stairs. Amalia came into the room. She was still young and comely.

"Angel!" She flew towards me and her arms twined around my neck like the stranghold of an octopus' tentacles.

"We will certainly have to marry him to Amalia," remarked Juan.

"Most certainly. That's all need to be said about it," replied Emilio.

But there was a good deal more to be said about it.

"I should jolly well think so," said my fiancée, Laura.

## Beauty in brief:

### Summer grooming ideas

By CAROLYN EARLE

- Most women will agree that trying to keep a fresh, crisp look in hot weather poses a problem in grooming. For the person who is prepared to take sun with discretion these small details are rewarding.

MOST people need to protect themselves against sun-burn on outdoor sorties. Either a good lotion or oil that will help proof the skin against heat and wind fills the bill.

Use plenty of lipstick or pomade to keep lips from parching and peeling. And don't forget cooling witch hazel to pat on bothersome irritations.

Hair needs protection if you want to avoid a streaked, bleached, and dried-out look in the autumn. Summer heat causes the scalp to perspire, so obviously you will need, and feel better for, frequent shampoos.

A brimmed hat or a scarf is advisable, otherwise surface hair tends to become straw-like.

By all means adopt a gay, cool hairstyle, such as the fashionable Italian hair-do, which is cut short in layers and falls into tendrils on the sides.

This is a wonderfully becoming, easily managed style, if you have the face and the hair for it. It needs thick, wiry hair to take and hold the boyish line.

for the answers, and when they returned to Gimeno that afternoon they took me with them.

Leaving the railway station, we walked around to a house in a nearby street. A woman was standing at the door. She was not a tall woman, but everything she lacked in height was repaid threefold in girth. Several chins folded down upon her enormous bosom.

"You remember Pachuca?" asked Juan, with a wry smile.

Holy Mother, could this be my lost love? This barrel of lard the kittenish creature I had wooed under Fonolla's fruit trees?

She smiled coyly and gave me a greeting. An aroma of garlic drifted to my nostrils.

Seven or eight dirty and unkempt little hooligans were playing near the door. "And these?" I queried, waving a hand towards them.

"Mine," answered Juan, without much enthusiasm.

We left Pachuca and walked down the town to Senora de Kilpatrick's wine saloon. Senora was sitting behind the bar.

"Senora de Kilpatrick!" I cried, and held out my hands. "Senora de Azanga," she corrected me.

when I told her about it on my return, shortly afterwards, to the States.

"But all the same, darling, I'm rather glad you had to go back there to finalise that contract for your firm. If you hadn't seen them all again you might have spent the rest of your life regretting that Pachuca and what might have been. And I've never wanted to spend my married days competing with a memory."

"What an escape I had!" I exclaimed. "From all of them. The way they wanted to run my life for me!"

"The cheek of them!" said Laura. "As if I can't do that very well by myself." She is a trim little blonde, not much bigger than Pachuca had been. The same neat ankle, the same slender waist. And as I look, and remember, I feel a sudden surge of alarm; but this is quickly banished when Laura kisses me and assures me with a hug that none of her family ever runs to fat.

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ALL characters in the serials "A" and "short stories" which appear in "The Australian Women's Weekly" are fictitious, and have no reference to any living persons.



# ANN BLYTH

Film star Ann Blyth recently entered into two important contracts—marriage and a new movie deal.

**H**OLLYWOOD feels that Ann's marriage will be happy and that she will make a big name for herself in the musical field.

In the first place she is a level-headed young woman who believes in the importance of family life. Secondly, she has the voice to carry her to the top in musicals.

Three years' courtship preceded Ann's marriage to good-looking Dr. James McNulty in June of this year.

The ceremony took place at fashionable St. Charles Cathedral in Los Angeles.

Six hundred guests attended the wedding, which was a most elaborate function.

Actress Joan Leslie and ex-child star Jane Withers were bridesmaids.

Born in New York of English-Irish parents, Ann Blyth is as Irish as the shamrock.

She has the sort of beauty that is supposed to be typical of Ireland—dark hair, blue eyes, and a magnificent skin.

Ann, who has been in films nine years, took the first step along the road to show business at the age of five under the guidance of her mother.

She was 17 years old when her mother died, and already established as a singer-radio actress.

In her spare time she studied dancing and drama, and improved her voice by joining the San Carlos Opera Company.

Then Broadway producer Henry Shumlin chose her to play the part of Babette in "Watch on the Rhine" with veteran Paul Lukas. The play ran for 11 months on Broadway and nine months on the road.

While touring with the play in Los Angeles she was offered a movie contract and became a Universal starlet.

The young dramatic actress was bitterly disappointed when she was put into musicals like "A Chip Off the Old Block" (1944) and "Babes of Swing Street" (1945), but they did help to establish her with film fans.

Then by a stroke of luck Ann was lent to Warner Brothers in 1945 to play the role of Joan Crawford's selfish daughter in "Mildred Pierce." The film won the 1944-45 Academy Award and Ann Blyth was nominated as the best supporting actress of the year.

Shortly afterwards Ann suffered a broken back in a tobogganing accident which put her in hospital for months.

After more than a year of medical treatment, she made a comeback in a film titled "Swell Guy," and since then has travelled steadily along the road to success.

Pick of the films in which Ann Blyth has played during seven years of movie-making are "Another Part of the Forest" with Fredric March and "Top o' the Morning" with Bing Crosby, both made in 1949. In 1950 she starred with Mario Lanza in "The Great Caruso," and a year later co-starred with Gregory Peck in "The World in His Arms."

It was her charming singing and acting as Dorothy Caruso in "The Great Caruso" which persuaded Metro to buy out Ann's existing contract and offer her a lucrative new deal as top musical star with the studio.

Eager for singing roles, Ann accepted. Her first singing part will be in the screen version of the old musical favorite "Rose Marie," in which Howard Keel is the hero.

The 25-year-old actress will finish work on another popular "oldie," "The Student Prince," before retiring from the screen to await the birth of her baby in June next year.





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**1. REPRIMANDED** by Colonel Owens (Carl Benton Reid), right, for harshness to an escaped prisoner, Captain Roper (William Holden) learns he must arm the prisoners if Indians attack.



**2. WOUNDED** when savage Apache Indians ambush Roper's platoon, Lieutenant Beecher (Richard Anderson) is tended by his fiancée, Alice Owens (Polly Bergen), the Colonel's daughter.

## Pioneer exploit



**3. ATTRACTED** to Alice's pretty bridesmaid, Carla (Eleanor Parker), who is secretly a Southern sympathiser, Roper later tells her of his hopes for the West.

● "Fort Bravo," Metro's new Western, is filmed in Ansco color against the picturesque desert backgrounds of Death Valley and the mountains of New Mexico.

It's a rugged adventure, in which soldiers from opposing camps of the North and South of America join forces to withstand the onslaughts of their common enemy—the Redskins.

William Holden is supported by Broadway recruit John Forsythe, Eleanor Parker, and Polly Bergen.



**4. ESCAPE** of the prisoners is headed by Marsh (John Forsythe), and is organised by Carla.



**5. RECAPTURED** by Roper, who is embittered and disillusioned by Carla's treachery, the prisoners start back to the fort when they receive warning of an approaching Indian attack. They must stand and fight.



**6. PINNED** down by numerically superior Indians, Roper sends Carla and Marsh to safety. Confederate and Union soldiers who remain join forces to fight Indians.



**7. SURVIVOR** of the attack, Roper attends to only other survivor, Beecher, who is seriously wounded. To save his friend, Roper covers him with sand and moves off to draw the Indians' fire.



**8. RESCUED** when Carla and Marsh bring a cavalry unit from the fort to rout the remaining Indians, exhausted Roper learns that Carla loves him. Together they return to the fort.

THE AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S WEEKLY — December 23, 1953



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# Talking of Films

By M. J. McMAHON

## ★★ The Robe

FOX's technicolor biblical spectacle, "The Robe," tells a dignified, slow-moving story of the Roman Tribune who was placed in charge of the crucifixion and later converted to Christianity.

It is the first production in CinemaScope, the new, wide-screen process which requires no special viewing glasses.

There is no doubt that this new innovation has much to recommend it. It gives sometimes startling illusions of depth, and every now and again brings spectacle to vivid life.

At other times the screen has a way of blurring that is disconcerting. The fault here may be in the continual use of painted backdrops simulating Roman scenery and vistas of Galilee.

During sudden onslaughts of sound which descend from different sides of the theatre one is also apt to query the fidelity of stereophonic sound.

Seriously taken from New Testament events, the film story stars Richard Burton as the young Roman who wins by gamble the robe of Jesus at the foot of the cross.

Pretty Jean Simmons handles the slender role of Burton's patrician fiancée adequately.

Symbolising the masses who

are to win freedom to embrace the new Christian faith, Victor Mature's Demetrius, the Greek slave, measures up to demands.

Jay Robinson's performance as scheming, sadistic Caligula, on the other hand, is artificial to the point of farce.

In Sydney—Regent.

## ★★ Mogambo

METRO'S "Mogambo" is a re-make of the old Clark Gable-Jean Harlow hit "Red Dust." A much older Gable and lovely, acid-tongued Ava Gardner star in this new version.

It's an entertaining, superficial affair which will please Gable fans who appreciate his rugged romantic style.

White hunter Vic Marswell (Gable) takes a liking to wise-cracking "Honeybear" (Ava Gardner) when she is stranded at his isolated hunting headquarters.

When anthropologist Donald Nordley (Donald Sinden) and his wife, Linda (Grace Kelley), arrive on the scene to go on safari, Vic turns his attentions to the pretty and prim Mrs. Nordley.

Donald suspects nothing until Linda shoots Vic in a jealous rage. "Honeybear" intervenes to save Linda's reputation and marriage, and claims the spoils (Vic) for herself.

## OUR FILM GRADINGS

- ★★★★ Excellent
- ★★★ Above average
- ★★ Average
- No stars—below average or not yet reviewed.

Ava Gardner and Grace Kelley do well in their roles as the sparring rivals. Good support comes from Philip Stainton and Englishman Donald Sinden, appearing in his first American role.

As always, African animal life makes fascinating cinema. Soft technicolor and the panoramic screen make the most of Africa's vast and beautiful scenery.

In Sydney—St. James.

## ★★ Peter Pan

WALT DISNEY'S latest full length cartoon is "Peter Pan" (R.K.O.).

In adapting J. M. Barrie's famous childhood classic, "Peter Pan and Wendy," Disney has added one or two incidents and telescoped others. Only the more discerning small fry will protest at the omission of well-known incidents such as the kiss and the thimble, or Pan's adventure with the Never bird.

Disney has managed to capture to perfection the character of the conceited, vain, thoughtless, but thoroughly lovable Peter Pan.

Pan's adventures with his arch enemy, Captain Hook are the mainstay of the story. The



saturnine Hook Disney has created manages to look remarkably like a caricature of Charles II.

Several pleasant songs are woven into the fabric of the adventure.

As in "Alice in Wonderland," the dubbing of the characters' voices is well done. However, it came as rather a shock to hear Pan's pronounced American accent after the carefully chosen British voices of Wendy, John, and Michael.

The combination of Barrie's classic and the touch of pure Disney comedy should delight both children and grownups. The antics of the nursemaid dog Nana, and Hook's faithful crocodile shows the combination at its best. J.B.

In Sydney — Mayfair and Park.

JUDY GARLAND (above left) returns to the screen after four years' absence in "A Star is Born" with James Mason, Jack Carson, and Charles Bickford. Jean Simmons, one of her close friends, chats with Judy at the studio the day she arrived to begin work.

## News from studios

AFTER successfully breaking the ice by co-starring in "Houdini," youthful husband-and-wife team Tony Curtis and Janet Leigh will appear together again in "Men of Iron." Janet was borrowed from Metro for the occasion.

GLAMOROUS Gina Lollobrigida is not only starring in the new John Huston comedy thriller "Beat the Devil" but also in a naughty film from her native Italy called "Wife for a Night."

CONTINENTAL films are widening a huge bridge-head they've established in British public favor. More than a hundred British cinemas are now playing films from Europe. They include Italy's first technicolor film, starring fabulous Anna Magnani, called "The Golden Coach." Another is the new classic comedy by the "Charlie Chaplin of France," Jacques Tati, whose "Monsieur Hulot's Holiday" is packing in audiences after cleaning up big prizes at European film festivals.

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Wise little Mother...

She knows that one bottle of 'ASPRO' tablets in the medicine chest is worth two in the shop.



## Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

from page 3

again by mid-autumn and so I must not delay, however happy I have been."

"You must come again," David said.

"You must come to India," Darya replied. He wished to add, "Perhaps on your wedding journey," but he did not. To force a confidence was as unrewarding as pulling open a lotus flower. Neither scent nor beauty was the reward.

David smiled without answering and he stayed near Darya all day while he packed. Darya, who could be as lazy as a beautiful woman when he chose, became a man of action when he had made up his mind.

He put his belongings in order, the few gifts he had chosen for his family, small but expensive, a gold bracelet set with diamonds for his wife, a diamond sunburst brooch for his mother, for his father a set of Audubon prints of American birds, so different from those in the countryside about Poona, and for his sons small, strong mechanical toys. For brothers and sisters, cousins and uncles and aunts he bought watches.

By night of the next day he was ready, his bags packed, and David went with him to the train. Darya would not allow any atmosphere of farewell.

"There is neither beginning nor end to our friendship," he declared. "It was before we were born, and it will never end, unless we choose to separate ourselves, which I will not do."

"Nor I," said David.

As cheerfully as though they were to meet the next morning Darya stepped into the train, settled himself and waved his hand from the window. They had stayed to talk until the last minute, idle talk, friendly but not profound, as though both agreed that at this late hour there must be no new relations between them, and the train left almost immediately, and David was driven away again.

His father had not come home to dinner that night, he had telephoned that he would be late, and David climbed the stairs to his own rooms. The house was now very empty, the silence oppressive. He had scarcely thought of his mother for so many weeks that he could no longer summon her presence and he had no desire to do so.

The rooms were filled with the echoes of Darya's lively presence, his modulated voice, his rapid talk, and yet he did not wish Darya back.

He went into his own rooms and closed the door. He would go to see Olivia, he would simply go, on the pretext of looking at the buildings, and then he would make the opportunity to ask her to marry him. He felt an immense hunger, a hollowness of the heart and only the one name sounded its echoes, Olivia.

She was not easily found. He wandered about the roofless buildings, his eyes meanwhile searching for her and not finding her. The walls were rising above foundations and six new buildings were set in the woods about the pillared house, skill-

fully placed so that each seemed alone and yet part of the whole.

The famous New York architect his father had engaged was trading the raw upturned earth with dainty feet, a blueprint stretched between his hands. He greeted David gaily, beckoned to him and led him to a spot where the buildings were revealed in a magnificent perspective about the central mansion.

"The approach," the architect said proudly. "I have had exactly the proper trees cut away. The effect is good, don't you think? Spiritual, and yet solid! I have kept in mind the purpose your father has in the memorial. The house is the memorial centre, the source, let us say, the altar, so to speak. Around it the young men group themselves with their teachers. The inspiration comes from the centre."

He was a finicking little man, precise in speech, his black-ribboned pince-nez dangling from his buttonhole, but he was enthusiastic and David was compelled to admit that there was an effect, and the new buildings were subdued to the lofty nobility of the main house.

"Very beautiful," he said, knowing it was expected of him.

The little man was gratified. "Please tell your distinguished father," he begged. "Mr. Mac-Ard is a man difficult to please, but so worthy of being pleased. I wish to make every effort."

David said, "I'll tell him I like it very much."

"Thank you, thank you—" the little man said.

David nodded and walked away. It was now nearly noon and he had not seen Olivia. He must find her, since she had not allowed herself to be found. He went to the house.

The door as usual was open and the vista of wide rooms lay before him with no sign of Olivia. Fresh flowers were in the vases and she must be near, but he did not see her. He lifted the heavy knocker, struck it three times, and Mrs. Desard's voice floated out from the kitchen.

"Who is it?"

He stepped inside and went towards the voice. "It is I, Mrs. Desard. I came to see the buildings for my father, and before I go back I thought I'd—" He opened the kitchen door. "What a heavenly fragrance!"

"Grapes," Mrs. Desard said. She stood by the stove, a tiny dignified figure, stirring with a long spoon in a large pot. "Olivia is picking them and I am making jelly. It's hot work."

The weight lifted itself from his heart. "I wish I could help you," he said with sudden gaiety, "but since I can't make jelly perhaps I had better pick grapes."

Mrs. Desard did not answer for a few seconds, then she said without looking at him, "Olivia will be glad of help. At least, I suppose she will. You can't always tell about her."

"I'll try, anyway," he said.

He hastened into the hall again and out the back door, which stood open to the small, formal garden. Olivia had made a wonder here, the box trees were clipped, the flowerbeds weeded, and early chrys-

themums were beginning to blossom in red and white and yellow. He followed the paths and turned to the left through a yew gateway into the kitchen garden, and there he saw Olivia among the grapevines and shielded against the sun by a wide leghorn hat.

Pilate the peacock walked beside her, his tail in full display. She did not see David, or hear him, and he stood for a minute, enjoying the picture of her beside the gorgeous bird. She had on a yellow cotton frock and the full skirt flowed about her on the ground. He could see her profile, earnest above her task, the dark hair escaping to her neck and her fingers nimble among the vines. She plucked a large purple grape and put it in her mouth.

"Is it good?" he called.

Pilate screamed, she gave a start and turned her head.

"How long have you stood there watching me?" she demanded.

"Only a moment, I swear," he said, laughing.

DAVID came near to Olivia and stood looking down upon her. "I wouldn't have missed the sight for a world." Her face was upturned to him, her eyes huge and reproachful. "Do you mind?"

"Yes, I do," she said. "I thought I was alone."

"It isn't wicked to eat a grape," he teased.

"I thought I was alone," she repeated.

He divined a small anger in her, and he tried to dispel it, waiting no clouds upon this cloudless day. "Shall I help you? There are far more grapes here than you can ever pick in a day."

"You have on your fine clothes," she said, giving him a quick glance up and down.

"I don't care for clothes," he said.

He stood beside her and spread searching fingers among the vines.

"The best ones grow underneath," she directed.

"May I eat the biggest ones?" he asked.

"Only one every five minutes," she said.

He met her eyes and rejoiced to see them only mischievous.

"Is your Indian friend gone?" she asked suddenly.

"Yes," David said briefly. He did not want to talk about Darya.

"Will he come again?" she demanded.

"Not soon," he said, and then impelled by some hidden motive he went on. "It is more likely that I shall visit him in India."

"When?" she demanded.

"Not soon," he said again.

They picked the fruit in silence for a few minutes.

"You pick ten times as fast as I do," he said.

"I dare say this is the first time you have ever picked grapes," she replied.

"It is," he confessed. "I scarcely know how they grew."

"I thought so."

"Is that despicable?" he asked.

"It depends on what else you can do," she said.

"Not much, I am afraid," he confessed, and then he went on, urging the opportunity. "I am one of those men who need an inspiration before I work."

He stopped to turn his head towards her, but she went on picking.

"Olivia!"

She looked up at him, very grave.

"Olivia, I came here today to see you, only you."

She did not reply or move, and he looked deep into the dark eyes under the black and finely etched brows.

"We haven't known each other very long," he faltered, "but long enough for me to know I—love you!" His breath forsook him and the last words were a whisper.

Her answer was instant and composed. "Oh, David, I'm so sorry!"

He heard the words from afar and her voice rang in his ears like the toll of a bell.

"Sorry?" he repeated, half stupidly.

"Oh, so sorry," she said remorsefully. "I didn't know, David, not until just now, a few moments ago. I wouldn't have let you go so far if I had known. I'd have stopped you at the very beginning."

He could not speak a word, he could not make a sound. He stood still, looking down upon her grieving face.

"You haven't loved me very long, I'm sure of that, and so it can't be deep. You'll get over it quickly."

"It is deep!" he cried. "You don't know what you're talking about. I have never loved anybody before, I never shall again."

"Oh, don't say that, David!"

"Why can't you love me?" he demanded.

She let her eyelids flutter downward and saw his clenched fists. "I ought to be able to love you," she said in a small voice, "almost any girl would. But I can't."

"I ask you why," he insisted.

She threw out her hands and let them fall in a wide and graceful gesture. "How can I tell? Maybe because you're not strong enough. I don't want to be the strong one. I want to look up to a man."

"And you can't look up to me," he said in a dreadful voice. She was looking up at him, nevertheless, her eyes dark and pleading.

"I can't," she said in sorrow.

"You're just MacArd's son, aren't you? The great MacArd!"

He looked down upon her upturned face and felt bitterness acrid in his breast, dry upon his tongue. Then to his horror he felt that he must weep and he turned and walked quickly away. After such words he could not, must not weep. He hurried from the house, and down the little path to the river, and in a hidden spot he threw himself upon a bed of dying ferns.

Among their curling fronds and fresh green he buried his face and wept, it seemed to him for hours, and then weeping alone turned into prayer, the first real prayer of his life. "Oh, God, what am I going to do? What am I now?"

The words burst from his wounded heart, he heard them as though they were spoken by someone else, a voice other than his own, and under the awful cry he trembled. Was there no answer?

He did not hear reply. The sounds of the wood he could hear, the crackle of twigs, the flutter of leaves in the breeze, the distant call of a quail. The sun beat down upon him in the stillness and he lay there with his eyes closed, the smell of the warm earth in his nostrils mingled with the scent of

## Dolls for Christmas

SMALL boys have been demanding space suits, rocket ships, and ray guns as Christmas presents, but girls' tastes have remained conservative—they still ask for dolls.

Many of the dolls which will gladden little girls' hearts this Christmas morning will have come from a Sydney factory which turns out 30,000 of them each year.

The factory is run by Mrs. Vera Kent, a 48-year-old grandmother, who started making toys 21 years ago with £1 capital, a sick husband (he was gassed in World War I), four young children, and a ton of courage.

The story of Mrs. Kent and her doll factory is part of an article about Christmas toys in the December 22 issue of A.M., the popular weekly magazine.

crushed fern. Then slowly he felt a strange quiet steal over him. He began to think.

Darya had come between him and Olivia. Had she not seen him in his strange Indian beauty, his dark brilliance, she might have spoken differently, for she would not have known that such a man existed.

It was not mere charm. He could not accuse Darya of willfully casting that net over Olivia. No, Darya had simply been himself, though inspired, perhaps, by the directness of her eyes and the fearlessness of her mind. She, too, had her charm over him, doubtless, accustomed as he was to the shy silence of Indian women in his presence.

He sat up suddenly and wrapped his arms about his knees and stared out over the glittering river. She had said that she must be able to look up to him, and she said it because she had seen Darya. How rash he had been to propose to her so abruptly this morning without waiting to discover her feelings!

He felt himself a boy humbly young and yet wounded, wanting in wisdom, foolishly impetuous. He had gone to her and asked for her love as though it were a toy or a sweet instead of his whole life.

In the midst of the bright morning he was overwhelmed with gloom and bewilderment. Vague aches pervaded even his body, he was shot through with little lightnings of pain. He thought with anguish of his dead mother, to whom he had been alive he would have turned for comfort and laughter.

"Silly—," he could hear her tender voice always underlain with laughter—"if she wants to look up to you, why don't you start climbing?"

He bowed his head on his knees and closed his eyes that he might hear that clear voice he remembered. It was exactly as though she had spoken to him. Perhaps she had, perhaps it was the only way she could reach him, now, through his memory of her voice and his imagination of what she would say were she here.

All his being melted, and from the fusion a pure desire distilled and shaped itself through longing into prayer.

"O God," for now there must be God, "tell me how to begin."

He felt his heart quiver in his breast. He dared invite such leadership only if he dared to follow. He sat motionless above the cliff.

The air was still and hot and the sun blazed upon him. Far off he heard the scream of a hawk whirling into the sky. He waited, his mind empty, his consciousness stayed, and suddenly he saw India, a crowded street. Dark faces turned towards him, startled and surprised, as though they had been summoned against their will.

He was frightened at their clarity and he lifted his head and saw only the river, the blue shores beyond, and the soaring hawk. What did it mean that he had seen India here except that he had asked direction and had been given answer? He had stepped over the divide

between this visible world and beyond, and the way had been made plain.

The prospect was too vast to comprehend and he tried to encompass it in the words of his age. He thought of dedication, consecration, mission, and the passionate words were wine to his soul. No one needed him here, but in India the human need was boundless. He did not know what he would do there, but God—he spoke the name with a new reverence—God would show him.

This, he supposed, was what it meant to be born again. As naturally and unexpectedly as his first birth from his mother's body, rebirth had come. What had been his world ceased. He had been driven out of it first by his mother's death and now by Olivia's refusal, and in his helplessness a new life was revealed. He drew his breath deeply and got to his feet.

"When did you get this notion?" MacArd said harshly.

He had seen for several days that his son was silent and absent-minded and tonight at the dinner-table the boy had scarcely touched his food. Then there in the library after dinner he had blurted out that he wanted to go to India as a missionary.

"It is not a notion, it is a conviction," David said.

MacArd lifted his shaggy head and caught Leila's eyes looking down upon them from her portrait above the mantelpiece. He looked away from her. "You can just get over it. I'm building MacArd Memorial, but not for my only son. Who's to take over after me?"

"I intend to live my own life, under divine direction," David said.

A man could not be rough with his only son. MacArd had learned that long ago when once he had whipped David for disobedience and he then had gone into convulsions of crying. Leila had flown at him, she had sobbed and declared that she would leave his house if ever he whipped their son again.

Well, he had never whipped him again, nor could he now. He flung out his arms. "A fine joke on me. A fine, nice joke! I spread a net and caught my own son! I gambled on God and my son is the stakes and I've lost! Ha!"

He snorted and sighed and descended to self-pity.

"Look, son, I'm getting old. Can't you just stay with me for a few years longer?"

"I have decided, Father," David said.

MacArd got to his feet and stamped about the room, weaving his way around the vast table and between the heavy chairs of English oak.

"I guess I've wasted a lot of money building that memorial. I'd have given up the whole business if I'd thought it would give you the idea you were going to leave me. That miserable country! What would your mother say to me if I let you go? Snakes, heathens, filth—well, there's plenty of other

To page 42

## IN AND OUT OF SOCIETY

By RUD







## Be Your BRIGHTEST! Look Your BEST!

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## Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

[from page 41]

turn to go. Not my son! I'll set fire to the memorial and let India go to hell. Can't be worse than the way it is over there, anyway."

David did not reply, and MacArd after a moment stole a look at him sideways from under his rough brows. His son was sitting quietly watching him, exactly as Leila used to do when he rambled about something before her.

The resemblance tore at his heart and he collapsed into a chair. He sank his head upon his chest.

"All right, all right," he grunted. "I don't count. I know that. I give up. But you've spoiled any pleasure I can take in the memorial. I'll finish it, but I won't take any joy in it. You've ruined it for me."

"I must do what I think is right," his son said.

"Then I'll turn the memorial into a factory!" MacArd shouted.

They glared at each other, father and son, and neither moved.

The sun was creeping up beyond the grey ghats and over the walls and cupolas of Poona, above the minarets and through the white colonnades and tall green palms. The streets were already astir, the bullock carts creaked, and water carriers splashed the dust with small liquid spheres that rolled along like dark quicksilver.

In his bare, quiet study in the mission house David sat with his teacher. This part of his work he enjoyed, the early hours of thoughtful pondering over the lacelike script of Marathi text. At first it had seemed impossible to decipher one symbol from the other, but slowly he was able to read and the graceful design was beginning to be a language.

He had begun by studying Sanskrit, at Darya's suggestion. The roots of Indian thought were to be found in the ancient Sanskrit texts, Darya said, but David had discovered in them amazing parallels to Christian thought.

Upon the whitewashed wall, opposite the table at which he now sat, he had a text that he had carefully copied upon heavy cream colored paper, a prayer from the earliest scriptures of Hinduism:

From the unreal lead me to the real.

From the darkness lead me to light.

From death lead me to immortality.

His teacher was a tall ascetic Marathi, who was not a Christian. He sat immobile upon a low bamboo chair, wearing garments of cotton cloth, a hat-like turban on his head, his legs apart, his feet turned out, and his dark hands resting exactly upon his white-clad knees. His wrinkled face was grave, his little black eyes were narrowed as he listened.

David looked up from a long passage he had been tracing aloud from St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans, translated into Marathi. He smiled faintly at the dark attentive face.

"Forgive me that I read so long from the scriptures of my own religion."

The Marathi shook his head. "And why should you say this, Sahib?" he replied. "It is a religion, it is good, you do not demand that I eat your bread and drink your wine, and while I listen I can fix my mind yonder."

He nodded towards the Sanskrit prayer, framed upon the wall.

"All religions are good," he declared.

At what point, David inquired of himself, should he challenge this frequent declaration, to which he had thus far replied only with silence?

Silence implied acceptance, and he could not and must not accept the easy Indian attitude towards all religions.

Any religion was better than none, so far he could agree with the Marathi teacher, but he longed to explain to this kind and proud man that the fruits of western Christianity were surely better than others. He had become convinced of it during this year in India, although when he left home, last year, he would have denied it because it was what his father said.

Father and son had remained unreconciled, although as his duty and because his mother was dead David wrote to his father twice a month and received in return a monthly letter. But in spirit they were far apart. For his father had persisted in his monstrous wrath, and he had made the place he had planned as a memorial into a factory.

Instead of young men learning of God, men and women, ignorant and uncouth, crowded into the big rooms at machines and made precision instruments for the MacArd industries. At the foot of the hill along the railroad hundreds of small houses were built, and there was a railroad stop for shipping.

Dr. Barton, bitterly disappointed, had ignored the whole change after two stormy hours of argument with MacArd himself. The climax had come, as he told David, when with courage given him, he believed, from God, he had told the old tycoon the truth.

"You thought you were serving God by building a monument, Mr. MacArd. When he asked not for a monument but for your son, you grew angry. Do you think even you can be angry with God, Mr. MacArd?"

To which MacArd had replied, his eyebrows and beard bristling red, "I always make my own terms, Barton, and I'll do it with God himself—if there is a God!"

For whatever impulse towards religion had risen in his father's heart after his mother's death, David knew had died down. Stony soil, perhaps, wherein the seed could not grow!

He himself refused to feel guilty, or to believe that had he obeyed his father the seed would have grown. Sooner or later the MacArd Memorial would have become something else, anyway, if not a factory then some sort of a tool for the MacArd interests.

And as he had separated himself from his father his own growth had been hastened—that, too, he knew. The powerful shadow was thousands of miles away, and he was honest enough to wonder sometimes if his call to India, which had seemed to come so simply and clearly from God that day on the hillside above the Hudson River, had been partly because even then he wanted to go far away.

If so, the call was no less valid, for God worked in mysterious ways. His faith had grown deeper while it became more reasonable, and the very atmosphere of India made faith reasonable. Religion was vital in the air, and sometimes, he thought, the only vitality. His task and his challenge was to make his own religion the most vital of all.

Meanwhile, life was pleasant. The mission house was large and cool, and white-clad servants flitted through the shadows of the drawn bamboo curtains, bringing hot tea and small English sweet biscuits just at the hours when he began to feel fatigue.

There was even an English society and the Governor gave parties to which he was always invited, and there was English

service on Sunday in the Cathedral.

His senior missionary, Robert Fordham, did not encourage his joining too often in the festivities of the English people in Poona, but it was necessary to remain on good terms with the Governor, for sometimes favors must be asked. Missionaries must be loyal to Government, Mr. Fordham said solemnly, for only the protection of Empire made it possible for them to come and go as they wished about the countryside.

Indeed, Robert Fordham often disagreed with young and rebellious Indians when they complained that India should be free, and at times he rebuked them with real severity, declaring that India was infinitely better off under the British than it had been when it was torn between the regional rulers who in the old days had oppressed the people while they destroyed each other with Oriental savagery.

It was true, David supposed, and yet something in the dark and passionate eyes of young Indians made him doubt the wisdom of the older missionary, under whose direction he was.

The morning hours passed, the sun rose high, and the compound which had looked so cool and green in the early morning now glinted with heat.

He was aware suddenly of being hungry and he closed the book. "I must not keep you beyond your hour," he said to his teacher. "I forget how the time passes!"

"For me time is nothing," the Marathi replied. "I have sat here watching you. You do not tell me what your thoughts are."

David gave his ready smile. "They are scarcely thoughts, not worth telling. I put off real thinking, perhaps because I do not know yet what I ought to think. I feel I know India less and more as time goes on."

The Marathi laughed. "When you can think in our language, you will know us. Give yourself another year."

He rose, and David rose with him. They parted as usual, and the Marathi went away, his full white trousers swinging about him.

David put his books together and went to his room, next to his study, to prepare for the noon meal. The mission house was a large square bungalow, encircled with a deep arched verandah to keep the heat of the sun from penetrating into the rooms.

A wide hall divided the house, and at one end was his study and next it his bedroom. Both rooms were big and the bare floors, the bamboo furniture, and the high ceilings gave them an air of coolness.

When he had washed he went down the hall to the dining-room, where Mrs. Fordham was already seated at one end of the oval dining-table, ladling soup into flat English soup plates.

"Sit down, Mr. MacArd," she said with brisk good humor. "We won't wait for Mr. Fordham." She bent her head, her mouse-brown hair always dishevelled, and gabbled a swift grace.

"For what we are about to receive, Lord make us truly thankful. Amen. Shall you get over to Bible Class this afternoon, Mr. MacArd?"

"I think not," David replied. "It's a bad example, you know," she said with her cheerful sharpness.

"I am sorry for that," he said.

He was accustomed to these fencing bouts with Mrs. Fordham and he carried them through with humor. As soon

To page 43



as Mr. Fordham came she would stop, and the meal would proceed kindly.

Mr. Fordham was a large man, shrewd and tolerant from long living in a hot climate. He came in now, his heavy body bulging in a suit of wrinkled white linen, and sat down at the opposite end of the table from his wife.

"Sorry to be late as usual," he said, "the gateman found a snake in the storeroom. It was one of the old cobras."

"Did you kill it?" Mrs. Fordham demanded.

"I sent the gateman for a dish of milk to draw it away," Mr. Fordham said. He began drinking his soup in gulps, opening his big mouth to receive the entire spoon with each gulp.

"Oh, Robert," his wife cried. "Why will you encourage them in their superstitions?"

"It's a very old snake," Mr. Fordham said mildly. "It's been here for years, and it only wants a dish of milk each day."

"Nasty creature," Mrs. Fordham declared. She banged a small table bell with the flat of her hand and a white-clad Indian boy scurried in and removed the soup plates. Another boy brought in a dish of goat-meat curry and some boiled rice. She ladled these viands upon plates and the boys placed them before the two men.

"Well, David," Mr. Fordham said. "How's the language coming on? You should be preaching a sermon soon, you know."

David put down his fork. The time had come to tell them that he would never preach a sermon. The long quiet months alone with his books and his solitary walks about the city had been fruitful and decisive. He intended to be a missionary of a new sort.

He was not content to preach in a small chapel, or to teach a few Bible classes and circle through a hundred miles of villages, admonishing half-starved people to worship a god they could not see. Instead he planned an attack upon India itself, through Indians, and those Indians would be young men, carefully chosen and highly trained, leaders of their own people. Upon them he would exert the utmost of his influence.

"I shan't be preaching sermons, Mr. Fordham," he said pleasantly.

"Not preaching?" Mrs. Fordham cried. "Why, how else will the gospel be heard?"

"Be quiet, Becky," Mr. Fordham said. "Now, David, just tell us what you have in mind."

He told them in a few words, making it simple, making it plain.

## Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

from page 42

there. Tonight he enjoyed it in a profound, stimulating, troubled sort of way. The streets of Poona were crowded when he stepped from the gate.

They were always crowded, a solid flowing mass of men, dark faces, bare dark legs, white turbans, moving, crowding, eager, pushing, the dust rising, stirred by their feet and settling in the open shops and markets. The sun had set, but the straining anxious life went on in the winding crowded streets, drivers shooting from the carts that threatened to crush the people and yet they never did, the hot hairy shoulders of bullocks pressing against human beings, and the beggars, the fakirs, the sellers of small wares, shrieking above the din.

It was Friday, the day the lepers came in from the villages to beg, and they were going home again, their decayed flesh, their stumps of arms and legs uncovered for all to see, while the ones most crippled rode in little pushcarts. When they saw David, a white man, they howled at him for alms, but he went his way.

DAVID was no longer overwhelmed by all this as he had been at first. Now that he had made his plans and had set a routine for his life, he found it good to join this stream of life at sunset, or in the morning before sunrise when the air was cool. The Indian night was beautiful, the stars hung enormous in the sultry sky, and he turned away from the street into the Poona theatre, a great, dusty, flimsy hall lit by candles hung high in big glass bowls.

Two balconies, supported by hand-hewn wooden pillars, were filled with white-turbaned men and the pit was nearly filled. Large holes, not repaired, gaped in the roof and let in the night air and starlight, but the air was still hot and the sweet rank odor of humanity was close.

David hesitated, and then found a seat and sat down. Some sort of meeting was going on, students, he supposed, were making the usual outcry against Government. He watched their faces, so mobile, so intent to hear what the man said. These, he told himself, would some day be his men, his material.

A week later David was alone in the mission house for the summer. Poona was cooler than Bombay, though farther south, but even here the cur-

rents of air that prevailed usually between the two cities had died away. The heat of summer had fallen, and the people waited for the monsoons, the winds which alone keep India from being a desert, uninhabitable for man.

The winds begin in north India, born of the intense heat of Delhi and Agra, where, more than two thousand feet above the sea, the dry air and hot sands draw down the rays of a sunshine fatal and intense. That heat attracts the moist winds from the surrounding sea, and for two months the winds blow towards the north-west and travel southward, circling until opposite winds blow north-east, making two monsoons, during which seed can be sown in the earth and harvests can be reaped.

If the monsoons fail, the people starve. As yet, not a drop of moisture had fallen this year upon the glittering landscape. The streets were dust, except where the water carriers filled their jars at the rivers, and at the rivers the people gathered to slake their thirst and wash their dried bodies. Women hid in the shadows of their homes, and only the desperate women of their Poona saris, nine yards long, and went down to the river's edge.

For this season the church was closed and the Fordhams had gone to the hills. David had refused to go with them.

"I want to see what it's like," he told them. "The Indians have to live through it and I suppose I can." Mrs. Fordham was inexplicably angry with him. "Natives are fitted for the climate and white people aren't. You had better follow the example of the British. They've been here a long time, and it's only by being sensible that we can stay here. You'll break down, you'll get ill, you'll see!"

She did not quite say that it would then be their duty to leave the pleasant hill station and come back and fetch him, but David caught the overtones.

"You have no idea how the snakes and poisonous insects abound once the rains begin," she went on.

"I have no idea," he agreed, "and that is why I shall stay and see what it's like."

They had gone at last, unwillingly, with servants and mounds of baggage and bedding, and he had seen them off and had returned to the empty house, where only the cook's son was left to care for him. He had expected to find it lonely, and instead had found it pleasantly filled with peace.

Here he had pursued his solitary life, spending the hours of morning and evening in study with his tall Marathi, and in the hot hours alone he stayed with his books. On one of these days Darya had come to see him.

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David obeyed, his feet guided,

or so he thought, and soon the two young men walked together down the blazing street. "I envy you your garments, Darya."

"Then why not wear them?" Darya asked in his lively fashion.

"I suppose I had better keep my pale skin covered," David said. "At least, that is what I am told. Am I wrong?"

"I don't know," Darya replied. "How can I know? I am brown."

It was a small thing, an interchange almost childish, and yet David, sensitive to his friend, felt it a slight barrier between them. The truth, which he had not spoken, was that he could not feel at ease were he to uncover himself, to make bare his arms and legs and feet, to wear a twist of white cloth about his loins and a length of white cloth over his shoulder, and walk in sandals as Darya did. And would not the people stare to see a white man in this dress? Darya's dark skin did not look bare, but white skin would be naked indeed.

They had reached the great carved stone gate, and with a careless gesture to the watchman Darya entered, David following. Inside, the gardens were beautiful and green.

"How have you managed this?" David exclaimed.

"My father employs many water carriers," Darya said with the same carelessness. "And more than that, we have a stream of water flowing



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To page 44



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## ★ As I read the stars ★

By EVE HILLIARD

**ARIES** (March 21-April 20): Dashing all over the place, December 22, you may find the day expensive and unsatisfactory if you're a last-minute shopper. December 25 smiles on all your plans.

**TAURUS** (April 21-May 20): Good news, December 23, may set your heartstrings vibrating. December 24 should rate high in your memory; everything clicks and you just sail along.

**GEMINI** (May 21-June 21): A tremendous effort may succeed December 24, but it will take its toll of nerves unless you aim at a less ambitious target. Relax and recuperate, December 27.

**CANCER** (June 22-July 22): December 25 holds romance, happiness, contentment. Love affairs develop; there's domestic harmony for older natives. December 28 is a let-down after the preceding days.

**LEO** (July 23-August 22): More than one of you will succeed in combining business affairs and personal happiness, December 24. Physical upsets are likely to be your lot on December 28.

**VIRGO** (August 23-September 23): Should the morning of December 23 prove disappointing after promising much, you'll find December 24 ace high. December 27, a dream come true, continues on the same hopeful note.

**LIBRA** (September 24-October 23): Intense activity December 24, with home and hospitality the chief feature. Should you feel tired on December 27 you'll still think it well worth while.

**SCORPIO** (October 24-November 22): You may find December 22 bristling with problems. However, you'll solve them happily. A note of deep satisfaction runs through December 25.

**SAGITTARIUS** (November 23-December 20): December 24 is a case of full speed ahead to your heart's desire, but December 26 is no time to gamble with love or money.

**CAPRICORN** (December 21-January 19): Be careful, especially on the morning of December 23, to avoid disputes with friends or family. December 25 brings present joys and future hopes.

**AQUARIUS** (January 20-February 19): For many of you December 22 means coming to a decision with far-reaching effects. December 27 is fine for short journeys.

**PISCES** (February 20-March 20): December 26 is in the top flight for lovers; also for those tempting fortune with a mild gamble. Adventure beckons on December 28.

[The Australian Women's Weekly presents this astrological diary as a feature of interest only, without accepting any responsibility whatever for the statements contained in it.]



through the house, a natural fountain."

Darya led the way through one gate and another, and then by winding paths to a part of the house which belonged to him and his wife and children. There he opened the door into a large pillared hall, through which flowed a quiet stream, lined with green tiles. Potted palms and trees were set against the walls and low couches stood here and there.

As they entered two small naked boys climbed out of the water to run away and a young woman drew her sari over her head.

"Leilamani!" Darya called in his own Marathi tongue. "Please do not go away."

She stopped, the silken garment held across her face.

David stood waiting while Darya went to his wife and said in a manner most gentle and coaxing, "Leilamani, here is my dear friend, in whose house I stayed while I was in America. I was in his house and now I have asked him to come to mine. Is this not what I should do?"

His little naked sons had come to a halt and stood some way off, sucking their wet forefingers while their father had brought into their house.

She did not reply, and at last, very gently and as though she, too, were a child, Darya pulled at the silk across her face and drew it away. He held her hand as in a caress and he put his arm about her shoulders and coaxed her to walk with him, though she was very unwilling, until they came close to David, who stood waiting and smiling.

There Darya stopped, while his young wife, drooped her head and let her long black lashes curl against her cheek. "David, this is Leilamani, the mother of my children, and this, Leilamani, is David. He is my brother and you must not think he is like any other white man, but only my brother."

"Do not make her stay," David said in Marathi. It was pleasant to be able to speak that language which she could understand.

"Hear him," Darya said in delight, "he speaks as we do, Leilamani, and have you ever heard a white man speak so well like us before?"

She raised her head at this and gave him a shy, lovely look and now she let the silk stuff fall a little and gave David a shy, lovely smile, but still she was speechless.

"Another day," Darya was saying with an indulgent smile, "another day, David, she will speak to you. It is enough to-day that she did not run away. Go now, my dove, and bid the servants bring us limes and lemons and cold boiled water and honey. The children may stay and play in the stream. It is too hot elsewhere."

She went and spoke to the boys in a low voice, bidding them, as David could hear, to be obedient to their father.

Then she raised her hands to David in greeting and farewell, and drew the silk over her head again and went away, her sandalled feet noiseless upon the polished tiles of the floor.

"Sit down on this couch," Darya commanded.

David sank low on the couch. The children, silent and graceful, slipped into the water again and played with small stones. Servants came in soon with

trays of sweetmeats arranged on fresh green leaves.

The sudden coolness, the soft sibilance of the water slipping over the stones created an atmosphere so new, so restful after the intense heat and the anxiety of the continued dryness that he felt sleep creep over him as he relaxed. He had not slept well for many nights, even upon the thin straw mat which for coolness had replaced the sheet over his mattress.

"Rest," Darya said in his caressing voice. "I can see you are weary. You have grown very thin, David. Eat, my friend, and drink this fruit juice. It is sweetened with honey and that, too, will restore you." And while they ate and drank Darya fixed his shrewdly seeing eyes upon David and he said, "David, you do wrong to try to be a saint. Why do you not marry? Where is Olivia? Have you forgotten her? You know, David, some men carry life within themselves, but you, my friend, must find a source of life outside yourself. From Olivia you would draw strength."

"I have not forgotten her," David said. The dainty morsel of sweet in his mouth, the fluff of sugared pastry, went suddenly dry. Even Darya had no right to pierce the secret of his heart.

"Have you asked her to marry you?" Darya inquired with fond and pressing interest. "Yes," David said abruptly. "And she refused you?"

"Yes," David said. "Ah, that was foolish of her," Darya said warmly. "She should have seen not only that you need her, but that she needs you. Her only hope of peace as a woman is to marry a man who is gentle like you, David. You could teach her to be mild, and she would teach you to be strong, through love. It is the other way in my marriage, I acknowledge it. It is necessary for me to have a gentle wife, one who is obedient, who is silent when I am angry. Well, then, the foolish Olivia!"

Darya added earnestly, "But try again, David. You must not continue alone, it is the mistake Englishmen make when they allow their wives to go and live in England. Ask her again to be your wife, David."

"It is not as easy as you think," David said. He could not explain to Darya the nature of western love between man and woman. In some ways Darya was very alien and Indian.

"I cannot speak of her," he said abruptly. Darya pressed his hand, smiled, and shook his head. "Then we will not speak of her. Eat this cool melon; it is good for the kidneys in summer."

He ate and drank as Darya bade him do. He had not been hungry for weeks and the boiled water in the mission house was tepid and flat.

Then, grateful that Darya had not been his usual insistent self, he made talk. "Are there many houses like this in India?"

"Not many," Darya con-

tinued, "but there are a few. You are asking why we do not renounce our riches when so many are poor. I have asked myself also and it troubles me, and yet I do not accept the renunciation. My parents are old, I am the eldest son, I have my wife and children, and the family depends upon me—this, though I know that renunciation is the highest form of spiritual joy. My father says, nevertheless, that we who are rich perform a useful function. It is well, he says, for the people to know that there can be houses like ours, so that they, too, may have hope of fortune."

He smiled slightly. "Whether he merely comforts himself, I do not know. But you are the son of a rich man, David, and your Scriptures say, too, that it is hard for rich men to enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Our Scriptures say the same thing in other words."

This was the moment to tell Darya of his plans for his life and so he began, and he drew for Darya the future that he would make and how to his great school he would draw the best of India's youth and inspire them with strength and knowledge, and he would gather the finest of teachers and the strongest of faith from everywhere. What his father had not done he would do.

Darya listened, his eyes flashing, humorous, sceptical, tender, but David talked stubbornly on.

"And shall you make all these young Indians into Christians?" Darya demanded at last.

"Not against their will," David said.

"Ah, you will charm them," Darya protested. "I know your western ways! You will surround them with comforts and you will make them believe that your running water and your clean rooms and soft beds, your great libraries and your vast rooms and healthy food are all the result of your religion and so you will make Christians out of them. And then the young doctors will all want great hospitals and electrical machines, and they will not want to live in the villages and the teachers will not want to teach in village schools, and the girls will want to marry men who can give them houses like yours, and that is what they will think is Christianity."

"Is there any reason why a man cannot be Christian and live in a clean house lighted by electricity instead of by smoky oil?" David demanded.

"He must walk the way, my friend," Darya said. "He cannot come out of the village directly into your Christian America. He has to go back to his village that he left and make it over with his own hands, my friend."

"As you do, doubtless," David said with un-Christian malice.

"Ah, but I am not a villager," Darya retorted. "It would be false for me to pretend that I must do what I am not born to do."

"Nevertheless, I, too, must do what I think I am born to do," David insisted, "under God's guidance," he added.

"By all means," Darya

## Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

[from page 43]

agreed. "Let us not quarrel. Build your school and I will send my sons to it. But do not expect them to go into villages. They will come back here and ask me to put in electricity and I will refuse because I do not like electricity."

"Who said you must have electricity?" David demanded. "It is the inevitable result of your Christianity," Darya said. His mood changed suddenly and he was all coaxing again. "Be happy, David. It is all I ask."

The two young men fell silent, and after a while David slept. When he woke the children were gone, but Darya was there reclining upon cushions and reading a book by the light of a small lamp of brass hung on the wall behind his shoulder.

"Do not go home," Darya said coaxingly, "stay here with me, David. My house is your house. You are too lonely."

"I have had a wonderful sleep," David said, "a restful, cool sleep. But I must go back, Darya."

Darya teased him, "You are determined to be a saint, are you?"

"Not that," David replied. It was dark, and when they came out a servant was waiting with a lantern to see that no snakes lay in the path to the gate, and when they reached the gate Darya bade the servant light the way for David to the mission house.

"Serpents come out in the summer darkness, and you must be safe," he said.

They parted and David walked behind the man and the dust rose and stung his nostrils. The night was black and stilling and the light of the lantern shone through a golden haze. At the gate he gave the man some money and the gate-man lit a torch and went before him into the house, again to guard him from the creeping serpents of the night.

The house was still and hot, and David went upstairs alone by the light of a lamp he had lit and now carried in his hand, and his footsteps echoed upon the bare floors. He entered his room and looked about him as a habit to see whether scorpions or centipedes were anywhere near. Lizards were harmless; they clung to the walls and the ceiling and ate the mosquitoes and therefore were friendly, and sometimes in the night he heard them fall with a soft plap upon the cotton roof of his mosquito net. He undressed and poured water over himself in his bathroom and then went naked to bed.

For some reason, against his controlled will, in that night he dreamed a hot and throbbing dream of Olivia. He dreamed that she had come, that she was here, and that he held her in his arms. He dreamed that when morning came she did not go away, that she stayed here, she lived here, and they were happy together.

It was the first time he had dreamed of her since he came to India, and when he woke in the darkness before dawn he knew that what had set him dreaming was Darya's wife. Darya loved her, and how strange that her name was Leila—Leilamani!

He had been astonished to

hear it spoken, and he had not wanted to tell Darya that Leila had been his mother's name. And thinking of his mother he fell into memories of his home and of his boyhood, and then of Olivia again, and she came near to him and her eyes were as dark as Leilamani's eyes.

Try again, Darya had said, try again, David! He lay stretched upon the dry mat, in the blackness, listening to the almost noiseless scuff of lizards, the dry, almost silent, rustle of their feet. Far off somewhere now, just before the dawn, when, if ever, the Indian night was still, he heard the wry wailing of a human voice chanting to the subdued beat of a drum.

A timid woman might be afraid of India in the night, but Olivia was not timid. Yes, he would try again. Darya was right. It was not good for a man to be alone in India. He rose from his bed in the night and lit the candle on his table, he pulled up a bamboo chair, and wrote the first love letter of his life.

**A**CROSS the city Darya was also writing to Olivia, and Leilamani was leaning on his shoulder, her hair flowing loose down her back. She watched each curve of the English letters, admiring his skill and adoring his strong brown hand. Only a little while before that hand had been caressing her. They had made sweet love together, then Darya had lain thinking of David, who had no such joy, and Leilamani had pouted and wanted to know what he was thinking about.

## Continuing . . . Office Party

[from page 5]

would get too much. "Have I treated you so badly, Nora? I'm sorry if I have."

"You—you haven't treated me badly," Nora choked. "It's yourself. You of all people, being such a poor type and so mean to people who . . ." She faltered, gave up, and added a weak, "That's what gets me, Mr. Bain."

"Now take it easy, Nora."

A cool, familiar voice at his shoulder complemented his advice. "Please do, child. It's Christmas. Here," Julia was handing the girl a wisp of lace handkerchief from which Bain caught the scent of the perfume that was his favorite for his wife.

She looked up at Bain, a look in her eyes he had not noticed there for a very long time indeed. A look of concern, assuredly, and—yes, love. Why not love?

And it came to him that it must have been there often, for it was not a thing to go away and then come back suddenly at Christmas time. Julia's love was not a winter snowfall, or laughter, or anger, or fear, coming and going swiftly.

"Forgive me for not welcoming you to your own party, darling. I thought I had the doorway covered, but Archie Morrison cornered me."

He would, Bain thought in a quick unaccustomed stab of jealousy which he checked at once. "Julia, I—"

She held a finger near his lips. "Why don't you come with me a minute, Sandy, while Nora looks pretty by the punch bowl?"

She linked her arm with his, and there was something in this gesture that was like holidays long past, of happiness and heartbreak and everything between. Now in the crowded room these two were a symbol of the kind to which guests were drawn as to a magnet moving across the room.

It took them several minutes

So he said not now. Darya's brother, had no wife, and he told her about that proud tall girl who would not marry him, and then he had to explain that in the strange country across the black waters the young women were wilful and would marry only as they chose.

As Leilamani had listened she grew grave.

"It is very wicked," she said, and then out of pity for the young American whom Darya loved she went on with gentle decision. "And you, beloved, should help your soul's brother."

"I?" Darya said, very sleepy. "You should," she repeated. "You must write a letter to this Olivia and tell her she is wrong to refuse to marry. Tell her how thin he is and how he is alone in that house. Make her heart soft—you know how to do such things, Darya."

He laughed at her mildly, too happy to move, but Leilamani would not let him rest. She pushed him with her soft hands and when he would not move she got out of bed and walked about the room, her long black hair swinging about her, and she sang so that he could not sleep, a song she made up as she went.

So between laughing and singing and then being a little angry until she coaxed him with reasonable words, reminding him that he did often say he would do something and then forgot it or delayed until the cause was lost, at last he got up and began to write the letter. When it was done he read it aloud, translating it into their own tongue as he read.

"Miss Olivia Dessard:

"Dear Sister:

"You will consider it strange to receive a letter from me, but

To page 46

## Wuff, Snuff & Tuff



by TIM



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4155, G.P.O., Sydney, for  
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Menthoids Diet Chart.

## Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

from page 44

I write you for my friend-brother, David MacArd, and I think you have not forgotten him. He is here in Poona, if you do not know it, living alone in the mission house, all other missionaries having departed to the cool hills during the hot season we are now enduring.

"He is a strong saintly fellow and he wishes to endure as our people are doing. Nevertheless, he is very thin and he suffers from want of wifely care. As his friend and brother, I beg you to reconsider his question and join him."

"In case he does not ask you again, as I have advised him to do, kindly let me know and I will beg him to take courage. I am sure that you will not find so good a husband wherever you look. I await your reply eagerly."

"Your friend and brother,  
"Darya."

This letter Leilamani approved, and when it was sealed and stamped she called for a servant and bade him to take it instantly to the post office and put it into the night box.

By the chance of Leilamani's insistence, Darya's letter caught a ship at the last moment, whereas David's letter was delayed until the next ship, and this made a matter of two weeks and more between the two letters as they reached Olivia's hands. She had, therefore, these weeks in which to laugh first at Darya's efforts, and then to grow thoughtful and then to wonder if David would write to her or not, and if he did what she would say.

When his letter did come her heart was already prepared, and this was thanks to Leilamani, whom she did not know was alive. She took up David's letter and read it again.

"You may say to yourself, Olivia, that you have no call to the mission field. Well, dearest, do not worry about that. It is not required that a wife must also be a missionary. She will help him, she will strengthen and comfort him, she will be his companion. When I say these words, thinking of you, I grow giddy with love for you. Can such things be—for me?"

She let the pages fall into her lap and looked out of the open window beside which she sat, into the park across the street. It was a small park, she and her mother lived in an unfashionable part of New York, and on the benches old men sat drowsing in the shade of a few grimy trees. She shivered, fascinated again as she often

was by their misery, their age, their loneliness, their poverty.

Once they had all been young and now they were old and that was the tale of their life. It might be the tale of hers as the years passed. Oh, she was busy enough, she had friends for the present, family friends, but she had nothing of her own except her mother, and her mother could go with her to India.

David had enclosed to her a small snapshot of the mission house. It looked comfortable, set in the big compound and encircled with arched verandahs. The air of romance was about it.

She rose with decision, and the letter fell from her lap to the floor. She opened the mahogany desk against the wall and began to write quickly and with resolution.

"Dear David—"

Well, that was the best she could do. She had never learned to use the words of easy love and she could not pretend.

"I have been sitting here at the window for hours, with your letter in my hands, reading it over and over again, wondering what I really want to do, and now when I know what I have decided, wondering whether it is entirely fair to you. For I shall say yes, David. I will be your wife."

"I don't know if I am in love with you. If I had to decide that, it might be to say I am not, at least not yet. I don't know you as you are now. But somehow I feel that I shall love you once we are together, and I will come to India soon—"

She was not easily articulate, words did not flow from her, she had never talked to anyone as easily as she had talked to Darya, but that was because he talked as he breathed, the light from his extraordinary eyes illuminating speech. She had never forgotten him and he made India easier to imagine.

She paused and sat thinking again for a long time. Then she wrote one more sentence.

"At least, dear David, I am willing to try it, if you are, and having given my word I will not take it back."

When she had written the letter she sealed it, stamped it, and she put on her hat and jacket and walked to the corner and put the letter in the mailbox.

Olivia kept her engagement to herself for days, for she sup-

posed that now she was engaged. The question was should she or should she not tell Mr. MacArd. David had said nothing in his letter to guide her. Perhaps she ought to wait for another letter, or perhaps she ought to write and ask him.

But a wilful delicacy had made her determined not to write to David again until she had his letter, and that might mean months of waiting before she knew. Moreover, she was not sure that she wanted his decision. Perhaps she should make her own. At any rate, she would not tell her mother until she knew whether she was going to tell Mr. MacArd.

The empty days of summer slipped by. Her friends had left the city and she knew that she and her mother would go nowhere. She had been born too late in her mother's life, she now realised. Her mother had reached an age where nothing mattered except the quiet of being left alone. When they had moved out of the house finally the last of her mother's energy seemed drained away.

She had made sure that the money they had received from MacArd was invested so that they could live on it and then she had ceased to think. Olivia had found an apartment they could afford and had settled their furniture into it and had hired an Irish maid to take care of them.

Her mother now simply agreed to anything. The old days of battle were over, time and youth had made Olivia the victor, and to her surprise she did not enjoy victory. It meant that childhood was past and whatever she did now was her own fault.

She decided, after more days of restless thought, that she should go and see Mr. MacArd herself. That much would be done, and her future would be more clear. It seemed nebulous enough sometimes, in spite of David's letter, which she read over and over, for she was impatient by nature and the long silence after she had written David became unbearable.

She knew that distance was the cause, she could see in imagination the ocean and, that crossed, then the miles upon miles of terrain of many countries, and then the sea again. But the hours dragged, nevertheless, and she wanted life to begin.

One morning she woke to changed air and brilliant sunshine. A hurricane had burst over southern waters the week

To page 47

## THIS WEEK'S CROSSWORD

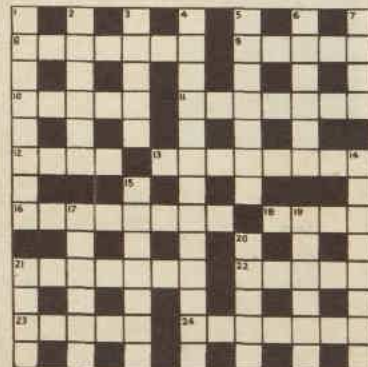
### ACROSS

- Connected with the sense of touch, but not the borrowing kind (7).
- Drive forward, mainly by the devil (8).
- Mother or I in New Zealand (5).
- Cycle pedal for catching a rodent (2, 4).
- Disappeared in broken stage (trap-door) (4).
- Contiguous to U.S. crosses to hardly more than a cent (8).
- See in the noise five hundred for the profit (8).
- Severe, but doubling the last letter you get the author of fairy-tales (4).
- Language without its centre is in the last stage (7).
- Come to an end if he is out (5).
- If 35.3 cu. feet not in order could be reset (5).
- Threatening but the end is commonness (7).

**Solution will  
be published  
next week.**



Solution to last week's crossword.



### DOWN

- Nearly fell down and judging by the end he must have cut himself (8).
- Mimes whose tea is surrounded by a broken statue from Hollywood (6).
- One thousand between a Chinese mile and it forms a boundary line (5).
- Not headgear for communist cavalry, just a nice little girl (2, 6, 4).
- Provincial poet who turns his art inside and can blow very cold (7).
- The inside of crisp arsenic is not dense (6).
- Hit the back of your friends (4).
- This evergreen plant turns dull with a hazard (8).
- Confused dim deer could be wondered at (7).
- Ship's pump made of a vehicle and a horse? (6).
- A traitor and I on fixed daily allowance (6).
- Small branch far cut up pre-dicians (5).
- Be without food yet quick (4).



before and the fresh winds had blown northward against the heat and stagnation of the city. She felt every nerve quicken, her muscles were eager to move, and her body urged her will. She would go down town today and simply announce at the MacArd Building that she wished to see Mr. MacArd.

Dress was suddenly important, although for days she had not cared what she wore, and she chose a grey silk skirt and jacket and a soft yellow blouse. She put on one hat after another and settled at last upon a yellow felt, broad-brimmed and soft, too. This was the day and the time, she decided, to look her feminine best, and she put on her yellow kid gloves.

Thus arrayed after her breakfast, she tiptoed into her mother's room, found her asleep, and tiptoed out again. Irene, the maid, was in the kitchen and she left a message that she was going for a long walk and then she was free. She walked the streets with feet made swift by health and excitement.

It was a long walk, but the cool wind was a delight, her cheeks grew pink and her black eyes bright. She caught a glimpse of herself in the glass doors of the entrance to the MacArd Building, and the handsome face she saw was the last assurance she needed.

"Mr. MacArd, please," she said at the desk. "Miss Olivia Dessard."

The tired blonde at the desk glanced at her. "Have you an appointment?"

"Tell him, please, that I have a letter from his son."

She sat down on a red leather chair and waited for a very few minutes, when a man came in.

"Mr. MacArd will see you, Miss Dessard. Please come with me."

She rose and followed him through corridors and rooms filled with men and women and typewriters and machines, and then through corridors again until heavy mahogany double doors made a barrier. The man opened the doors and there were corridors again and offices, but carpeted and quiet

now, and then another heavy mahogany door confronted her.

This the man opened and there, behind an enormous desk, mahogany again, she saw MacArd sitting reading a letter.

He wore pince-nez and a heavy black ribbon and his suit was of black broadcloth, his stiff wing collar was whiter than any snow and his black cravat was of satin.

She saw all this quickly as a frame for his grim, grey face and the red-grey beard and eyebrows. Underneath the brows, deep-set, his small grey eyes stared at her. The pince-nez dropped the length of its ribbon.

"Well, Miss Dessard! Sit down."

The man went away and shut the door softly and she sat down in the upright red leather chair on the other side of the desk.

"Good morning, Mr. MacArd."

"Good morning, Miss. What can I do for you?"

She did not take off her yellow kid gloves, but she stretched her right hand across the desk. He seemed to be surprised to see it, but he shook it formally without getting up.

She smiled and leaned her elbows on the desk. "I don't wonder you are surprised to see me, Mr. MacArd, but I felt I ought to come, although I know you are busy. I have had a letter from your son."

"Indeed!" He put down a letter he was still holding in his left hand and stared at her, his eyebrows twitching.

She went on. "He has asked me to marry him, Mr. MacArd, and I have said I would. I thought you ought to know."

She waited motionless, her eyes unwavering as he stared at her. Points of light shone in the deep eyes, and suddenly MacArd laughed.

"So he's come to his senses!" he shouted. His hairy face creased in thick wrinkles.

Her eyes questioned the laughter. "You mean—?"

He banged the desk with his outspread hands. "I mean he's

coming home, ain't he? He'll have to come home to marry you, won't he?"

"Certainly not," she retorted, amazed. "It didn't occur to him—nor to me. He asks me to come to India."

MacArd got up and leaned on his clenched fists towards her. "What? You ain't going? Why, I didn't think you'd be such a fool."

She tilted her head to look back at him. "Of course I am going!"

"Ever been there?"

"No, but I'm not afraid."

"Wait till you get there! Snakes, heat, beggars, filth, naked men strutting around pretending to be saints—"

"I thought you built MacArd Memorial to change—"

"There's no MacArd Memorial!" he roared.

He sat down abruptly and his great body seemed to crumple.

"Why, Mr. MacArd—"

"I gave it all up as foolishness," he said heavily. "I've got a precision works there now instead."

"A factory!" she gasped. "In our house—?"

"Not in the house exactly—that's administration and so on. Other buildings."

"I didn't know," she said.

She looked away from him then to the big window. Far beyond the city she saw the river swelling to the Sound.

The sun shone down upon the water, metal-bright.

"I suppose I should've told you," MacArd said heavily. "Still, I'd bought the place. I dare say if David had stayed here I would have carried out the idea. But when he was set on leaving me and going to India as a goddamned missionary himself I couldn't go on with it. My feelings changed."

"Did David know before he went?"

"Yes, but it made no difference. I guess nothing made any difference. He was set."

"I see," she said. "What she saw, gazing out to the river as it rushed to the ocean, was a man different indeed from the

## Continuing . . . . Come, My Beloved

from page 46

boy she had known. He had dared to defy his father and choose his own path! She could not have believed it possible, but he had done it. He took on stature before her eyes, the son of his father.

She brought her eyes back to MacArd. "So now?"

He shrugged his thick shoulders. "I keep busy, all right. I have a lot of things to interest me. Look here, this letter—"

He took up the letter he had put down and fastened his pince-nez upon his nose with hideous grimaces. "You may not know anything about it, young woman, but the country is saved. Know why?"

Cyanide, potassium cyanide! Two young Scotsmen have found the trick, and here's their letter. I'll back them to any tune. Gold in Australia, gold in South Africa, gold in the Klondike, it's all helped, but this is the real saviour."

WITH a heavy hand, MacArd thumped the flapping pages of the letter.

"You remember that name—potassium cyanide! It will get the gold out of low-grade ore. At last I can do it. We have gold—all the gold we want."

"What does gold mean, Mr. MacArd?" Olivia insisted.

"It means that people are going to be able to pay their debts, it means business is going up, it means people can go to shows and spend money and have a good time! The country is solid again on gold." He was thumping the letter with every sentence.

"But what does it mean to you, Mr. MacArd?" Olivia insisted again.

The grizzled red eyebrows lowered. MacArd frowned at her. "Why, young woman, it will mean millions to me, that's what it'll mean!"

"I see," she said. "What she saw was that suddenly she loathed this big red-haired man and she wanted to get away from him quickly."

She got up and put her gloved hand across the desk. "Good-bye, Mr. MacArd. I'll be going now. I can see you are very busy."

"Good-bye, Miss Dessard. And, say, I thank you for coming. I'm glad that my fool son is going to marry you, and I'll send you a wedding present. No, look here! I'll put money in the bank for you every year. A woman likes some money of her own."

"Please don't, Mr. MacArd," she begged in instant distress.

"Yes, I will, too. Now don't you say a word. I shall do it, anyway. Why not? I want to do it."

She felt tears come to her eyes, to her own dismay. She could not change him. He was so big, so stubborn, so hateful, and so pitiful. He would never see anything as it really was, and he could not be changed.

Oh, that was the most terrible, pitiful thing, that he could never be changed! She tried to smile and then turned and hurried from the room, for of course she could never make him understand why she had to weep for him, but she had to, because she could not help it.

The monsoon winds came late, but they came at last and for days the thirsty land soaked up the falling rain. In the homes of rich and poor alike the people slept night and day to the sound of the soft thunder.

The terrible tension of heat and dryness had exhausted them, for even though they sat waiting for the rains they had not been able to sleep. The animals had wandered restlessly to and fro over the countryside and through the streets, looking for food and water, and men were idle because there was no use in scratching the dry surface of the fields with their shallow ploughs.

In Poona business was at a standstill. Money was gone and all but the rich were living on borrowed cash until the rains came. Now that the winds had

risen, had driven, the over the sea and now that the rains fell, weary people slept through hours without waking. As there were a few days between rains, they must go into the fields, but for present it was no sin to

In the mission house too, could scarcely keep it. His Marathi teacher did come for a week, and also struggled with the book was learning to read.

On such a day the post arrived drenched and late handed him letters wrapped in paper. One, he instantly, was from Olivia, moved by excitement, the postman a coin. The smiled, white teeth flashing dark skin gleaming in the. He was shivering, the he, the summer had changed damp coolness and his garments, scanty enough, like wet paper to his frame.

May the letter bring good news, Sahib," he trusted away as please though the good news were own.

David went into the he touched, as he so often was the warmth and humanity an Indian. There was no tance to overcome, the kindness overwhelmed people, the most hab gentleness was enough to their adoration. They ready to love. Yet they not childish. It was simply they had lived so long and such misery that their he were worn bare and the ne quivered.

He opened the novel, eager and fearful at once the news were good, if Ol were willing to marry him, what joy! And if she were In the weeks that he had wa for this letter he had steadi calmed his impatience, he refused to be restless. He consciously used the toran prayer to subdue his own lo ing, earnestly desiring in than anything else that the of God be done.

If she refused him he wo never marry. He would des himself to India. Living al

To page 49

# YELLOW is no substitute for WHITE

*I soon discovered... washing alone was not enough, it needs Reckitt's Blue in the last rinse to keep whites really white!*

★ ALWAYS REMEMBER

the 3 steps to successful washing



**WASH**  
to make clothes clean



**RINSE**  
to remove loose dirt



**BLUE**  
to stop whites turning yellow

Every wise housewife, whether she uses a Washing Machine or Copper, follows the three essential steps when she washes her white things . . . wash . . . rinse . . . blue. There is no short cut to real whiteness. Your clothes can be washed clean, but washing alone cannot keep them white; it's the last rinse in Reckitt's Blue which stops them turning a bad colour (yellow).

You cannot afford to miss the last rinse in . . . .

## Reckitt's Blue

OUT OF THE BLUE COMES THE WHVEST WASH



A little bird told me . . . that Robin Starch, the easy-to-mix starch, makes ironing easier and gives a lovely gloss. Robin Starch, the perfect washday companion of Reckitt's Blue.

**ROBIN Starch**  
Gives w-i-n-g-s to your iron





Set your heart on a **CROSLEY**



Set your heart on  
Crosley "care-free"  
defrosting

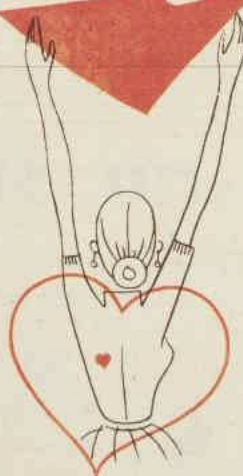


Set your heart on  
Crosley beauty.

Set your heart on Crosley "care-free" automatic defrosting—nothing to turn on . . . nothing to turn off . . . nothing to empty—and it works while you sleep!

Set your heart on Crosley convenience—the big roomy shelves, the small meats chiller drawer, the giant crispers—and five recessed shelves in the door doubling your front row storage.

Set your heart on Crosley genuine quick-freeze—and freeze and store a full week's supply of food and give yourself more leisure, fewer shopping trips, less kitchen work and greater living economy.



Set your heart on  
Crosley genuine quick  
freeze

Set your heart on Crosley beauty—and own the world's most beautiful refrigerator, awarded for the second successive year the U.S.A. Fashion Academy Award.

Set your heart on Crosley dependability—and ask your neighbourhood dealer to tell you about the Crosley five-year warranty, 12 months' free service.

We believe that once you've seen and priced the Crosley Shelvador '9' you'll never be satisfied with any other refrigerator.

Crosley Shelvador '9' automatic defrost, £248/10/-; regular Shelvador '9', £198/10/-. Prices slightly higher in country areas and in Tas. and W.A.

Set your heart on a

**CROSLEY**

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studying the ancient texts, Hebrew, Greek, and Marathi, had sharpened his spiritual senses and defined the reality of God.

He looked down at the open pages and his eyes took in Olivia's letter whole. Then his heart filled. He had not believed that she would accept him, but here were her own words. She did accept him, she would come to be with him, his wife, his own. He read the letter word by word, while the rain fell hard upon the roof over his head and dripped from the eaves of the verandahs on to the flower-beds.

It was a short letter, written in her firm, clear black handwriting, so plain against the dull blue of the paper. There was no sound but the fall of the rain and the beat of his blood in his ears while the tremendous certainty flooded his being. His life was changed, his difficulties were gone, his loneliness was over.

He fell upon his knees and lifted his face, he held up the letter as though to show it to all-seeing eyes. Then he tried to pray and could not because his heart was running over.

India had shaped him already more than he knew. He had been worn down by loneliness and heat and the pressing misery about him. His body was thin, his nerves were taut, and his heart was naked to every blow. Happiness, too sudden, had undone him, and he felt hot and uncontrollable tears under his closed eyelids.

He wanted to tell Darya later in the day when he was calm again, and he clothed himself in his English mackintosh and took a big English umbrella that belonged to Mr. Fordham and splashed his way across the city to the compound. Then he pounded on the locked gate. A sleepy watchman stirred himself at last and peered through slanting lines of rain.

"My master is sleeping, Sahib," he noncommittally answered. "We are all asleep. I dare not wake my master."

"Will you go and see if he sleeps," David urged.

He stood in the gatekeeper's house and waited, and after a

## Continuing . . . Come, My Beloved

(from page 47)

long time the man came back again.

"He was sleeping, Sahib, but he turned in his bed, and so I told him that you were here and he bids you enter. But everyone else is asleep."

"I shall not stay long," David promised.

He drenched the man through the drenched gardens and into the part of the house where Darya lived, and there he found his friend, lying, it was true, on a cushioned couch, a silk afghan rug drawn over him, against the sudden coolness.

Darya put out a languid hand: "David! Has something happened?"

"I had to come," David said. He stood looking down on Darya and their hands clasped. "I have a letter from Olivia. She has agreed to marry me."

Darya sprang from his couch and flung his arms about David. "My dearest friend! There is nothing I had rather hear."

"I shall be married here," David said. "I want you to be my best man—you know our customs."

"I will be whatever you say," Darya cried ardently. "You are my brother and she will be my sister. Come here, we will sit side by side, and now tell me everything."

"There is only that to tell," David said, but he sat down, and Darya seized his hand again and held it between both his own in his warm Indian fashion, and poured out his talk, fluid and eloquent, about Olivia and about David.

David listened, half entranced, half embarrassed. It was all very Indian, but he was alone with Darya and, since it did not matter, it was even pleasant.

Suddenly Darya paused and looked at David with mischief in his dark, expressive eyes. "Dare I tell you?" he asked.

"Tell me what?" David demanded.

Darya drew up his long legs and wrapped his arms about his knees. "Will you promise not to be angry with me?"

"Why should I be angry?"

"One never knows with you

Western men. You get angry suddenly and oddly."

David laughed. "I feel that nothing can make me angry at the moment."

"Well, then, I had better tell you quickly. Another day you might not be so glib. I wrote to Olivia."

"You wrote to her?"

"Before you did, perhaps."

"But why?"

"I told her you needed her and that she must marry you."

And making haste before the consternation of David's look, he described the midnight scene when Leilamani had compelled him to work a kindness for his brother, his friend, and so he had written a letter and she had hastened to send it.

AS he finished speaking, Darya was somewhat dashed at the gravity of David's look. "That little Leilamani urged me in kindness, David, and it seemed to me, too, a good thing to do. Were you an Indian, David, it would be a matter of course, a tenderness, a proof of love between us. Is not your happiness my own?"

He put out his arms and embraced David by the shoulders, coaxing him with his eyes and his voice. This was Darya at his real self, his Indian self, always the deepest self and the self so near the surface that the English veneer disappeared completely. He was even speaking in Marathi, his native tongue.

"Ah, my brother, art thou angry with me? And what is it our Tukaram says?"

"Can my heart unmoved be, When before my eyes I see Drowning men?"

"So, I, beholding three drowned in thy loneliness, did put out my hand on thy behalf and wilt thou hate me for this?"

It was impossible to be angry with him, and Darya, searching David's face, caught the softening. Instantly he was

lively again. He sprang up from the couch and confronted him, bending over with laughter, snapping his fingers while he laughed.

"And consider Olivia!" he cried in English. "Can you believe that anything I wrote would change her mind in the least? No, no, David, she is not like my gentle Leilamani. She will not come when you bid her come and go when you tell her to go. A noble woman, and beautiful, a wife to be proud of, but I warn you, she will always make up her own mind."

David yielded. "Darya, you confound by incessant talk. My mind whirls like a kaleidoscope. Let's agree—you are always kind and, though it is our Western habit for a man to attend to his own love affair, I grant that you mean to help me."

"And perhaps I did help you," Darya declared triumphantly.

"We shall see," David said, yielding again, because argument was futile. Darya would argue with relish and endlessly, recognising no defeat. And he wanted to be in his own rooms alone, and read Olivia's letter again. He wanted to make sure it was there where he had left it, locked in his desk.

Above all, he wanted to answer it immediately. He wanted to tell her to come at once, as quickly as she could. The words framed themselves aloud in his mind as he splashed his way through the rain and mud again to the mission house.

"Come, Olivia. Take the next boat, darling. I didn't know it, but I have been waiting for you ever since I saw you last. I can wait no longer."

The monsoons died away, the sun shone between the rains. The waiting earth sprang into instant growth and seeds that had lain in the dry soil waiting sprouted into the fresh green of fields and gardens.

Time sped, the seasons telescoped, spring, summer, and harvest rushed together, and the surrounding beauty of the



"For heaven's sake, Miss Taylor, put some lipstick on!"

countryside beyond the city, and the mountains still beyond, brought an exaltation David had never known before. The Fordhams came back again, and with a generosity upon which they insisted, when he told them he was to be married, they moved out of the big mission house into a smaller one, long empty.

Mrs. Fordham helped him to furnish again for Olivia, but he would not allow anything beyond necessities.

"Olivia has a mind of her own," he told Mrs. Fordham. "When I go to meet her in Bombay she will want to buy things herself, I am sure."

The Fordhams took away their modest bamboo and rattan furniture and he got along, furnishing only a few rooms from the Poona shops. Some of the Indian things were beautiful, he had not known how beautiful they were, for now Darya went with him and demanded that the best be shown him. He bought a few beautiful rugs, some inlaid silver, a low couch, and brocades so heavy with gold that insects could not destroy them.

He bought also a huge English bed of teak with a hair mattress and a canopy of fine Indian muslin.

Alone at night David knelt at the high new bed to say his evening prayers. He knelt upon a footstool, because the rains had brought a host of insects into the house, and he

did not like to be disturbed by spiders running along his or by a curious-minded nibbling at his toes. Then also the horror of cent or scorpions to distract his from God. He felt earnest anxious and he tried to pr himself for the life ahead he had two concerns.

Olivia must be happy he must take time to make happy in so far as he was But, and this was the g concern, she must not d his mind or even his heart must join him in the d direction under which lived, she must deepen consecration. Man and they must work together. God.

He would, he decided, continue his way of life his habits of prayer. He w be as he was, from the moment they met, so that would not see him only as bridegroom but also as missionary.

And he prayed, "Teach that I may teach, O God! Thou this mighty love I for her and keep it, lest it come my greatest treasure separate me from Thee."

His prayer went up and he lay and dreamed of her of how she would look w he waited on the dock in B bay and the ship drew n and he could see her face last.

To be continued

Here's to a Happy Christmas  
and Cleaner Hair grooming

"Yes, Brylcreem, the perfect hairdressing, is the perfect Christmas Gift for all the heads of your family. Buy Brylcreem to-day."

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MAKE YOURS A PYREX GIFT this Christmas—and you can't go wrong. Everyone who cooks loves work-saving Pyrex. Besides, from your pocket's point of view, Pyrex is a very practical idea: Pyrex looks expensive—but it's *inexpensive*. Incidentally, as well as the famous sparkling clear Pyrex, you can buy it in glowing colours of blue, green and biscuit.

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## 5 o'clock Festivities

CHRISTMAS and New Year parties are happy gatherings when you offer your guests snacks like the ones illustrated above. See recipes below for stuffed prunes, canapés, and open-faced sandwiches.

● Here are tempting appetisers for a late-afternoon party, plus some casserole dishes for those who stay on after the party is officially over.

**L**ATE-AFTERNOON parties call for a variety of savory concoctions piled on bread snippets (plain, toasted, or fried) or speared on cocktail sticks.

Piquant appetisers, attractively arranged on large platters and garnished with choice salad vegetables, are most effective.

You should, if possible, prepare the fillings, spreads, and garnishes early in the day and assemble them at the last possible moment.

If you must prepare everything well ahead of time, then be sure to wrap the completed platters in food-wrapping plastic before storing them in the ice-chest or refrigerator.

Drinks should be well chilled, particularly fruit-juice cocktails, which go over in a big way if they are colored and spiced for effect and if the party mood is festive enough.

There are always a few who linger on after most of the guests have gone, so be prepared to cope by having a satisfying casserole tucked away in the oven and a pile of cut

bread ready to make toast. Make the most of the suggestions on this page—and here's to happy entertaining.

All spoon measurements in our recipes are level.

### SAVORY CANAPÉS

Canapés of fried or toasted bread or pastry, cut into shapes and spread with piquant mixtures, should be interesting to look at and good to eat.

To make canapés, cut day-old bread into slices a good 1/4 in. thick. Remove crusts, cut into rounds with a scone cutter or into triangles, squares, or oblong strips with a sharp knife. Deep-fry, toast, or leave plain. Make some with brown and some with white bread. Top with any of the following mixtures:

1. Thoroughly wash chicken livers, cover with boiling salted water, simmer until tender. Drain and mince. Mix with an equal quantity of chopped hard-boiled egg. Bind with mayonnaise, season to taste. See illustration.

2. Spread canapés with processed cream cheese spread or cottage cheese softened with milk. Cut tiny petal shapes from parboiled red pepper and arrange flower-fashion on top, making centres of yellow cocktail onions. See illustration.

3. Soften butter or substitute to spreading consistency with mayonnaise. Spread on canapés, top with shelled prawns dipped in lemon juice. See illustration.

4. Cook, skin, and flake salted cod or cape fillets. Flavor with chopped olives and cayenne pepper, bind with mayonnaise. See illustration.

5. Mix curried hard-boiled eggs with chopped apple and chutney.

6. Mix finely chopped apple and celery with grated cheese, bind with mayonnaise.

### COCKTAIL-STICK SAVORIES

Spear tiny savory balls with cocktail sticks, garnish platter with crisp carrot straws, celery curls, or any salad snippets.

1. Bind whole-kernel corn with thick white sauce and soft breadcrumbs. Flavor with crumbled cooked bacon. Shape into tiny balls, coat with egg and breadcrumbs. Deep-fry and spear on cocktail sticks. Reheat in ovenware dish.

2. Make small balls of minced

cooked chicken or rabbit bound with mashed potato and half a beaten egg. Coat with egg and breadcrumbs. Fry and reheat as above.

3. Wrap stoned prunes in small pieces of bacon, fasten with cocktail sticks. Cook on greased tray in oven. Serve hot.

4. Flavor sausage mince with chopped parsley (use plenty) and grated onion. Shape into balls, roll in flour, coat with egg and breadcrumbs. Deep-fry, spear with cocktail sticks, and reheat in oven.

5. To make stuffed prunes (as illustrated): Remove stones from large, soft dessert prunes. Stuff with finely minced ham mixed with breadcrumbs and moistened with mayonnaise. May be served with or without cocktail sticks.

### SALMON A LA KING

(Make in the morning, reheat in oven if required.)

One medium-sized tin salmon or fish cutlets, 2 1/2 cups medium-thickness white sauce, 1 tablespoon finely diced parboiled red or green pepper, squeeze lemon juice, 1 dessertspoon (or more) sherry, salt and cayenne pepper to taste, 4 or 5 hard-boiled eggs, tomato slices, soft breadcrumbs, butter.

Drain liquor from fish. Break fish

into flakes, removing bones and any dark skin. Fold into sauce, adding red or green pepper, lemon juice, sherry, and seasoning. Carefully fold in quartered hard-boiled eggs. Turn into greased ovenware dish, top with sliced tomato. Sprinkle with crumbs, dot generously with butter, bake until top is lightly browned.

### OPEN-FACED SANDWICHES

These are best made with fresh bread, either brown or white.

Cut bread into slices barely 1/2 in. thick. With a scone cutter cut bread into circles. With a smaller cutter remove the centres of half the circles, leaving narrow rings. Centres may be fried and used as small canapés.

Spread complete circle with any of the following mixtures, place bread ring on top, adding a little more filling to centre.

1. Cook green peas in the usual way, rub through a strainer. Flavor with onion juice and cayenne pepper. See illustration.

2. Grate cheese and mix to spreading consistency with tomato sauce or tomato puree. Flavor with a hint of Worcestershire sauce.

3. Spread bread with anchovy paste, sprinkle with chopped hard-boiled egg and chopped parsley.

4. Mix grated carrot, grated apple, and chopped parsley. Season with onion juice, bind with mayonnaise.

BY OUR FOOD AND COOKERY EXPERTS



# Readers win prizes

This week's prizewinning recipes include French pancakes with spinach filling, which win the main £5 prize, fish fromage, cherry ginger tart, and quickly made salad dressings.

**FRENCH** pancakes with spinach filling, which top this week's list of prize-winners, may be varied according to the occasion. For a special luncheon you might sprinkle mushrooms over the spinach, though this is expensive unless you can gather your own mushrooms. A more economical variation is to sprinkle the spinach with chopped cooked bacon.

The consolation prizewinning recipes are practical, and suitable for family use.

The salad dressings are particularly useful at this time of the year, when salads are the order of the day.

When entering recipes in this popular contest, write on one side of the paper only, and attach full name and address (including State) to each page. Post to Recipe Contest, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

Spoon measurements in all our recipes are level.

## FRENCH PANCAKES WITH SPINACH FILLING

Four ounces flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2 eggs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups cooked

spinach,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup medium thickness white sauce, chopped sautéed mushrooms to taste, 2 tablespoons grated cheese.

Sift flour, salt, and baking powder. Gradually stir in beaten eggs, milk, and water until smooth and free from lumps. Pour sufficient batter into greased pan to cover base. Cook over steady medium heat until set and lightly browned underneath. Loosen edges with a knife, turn carefully, and cook other side. Spread each cooked pancake with spinach mixed with white sauce, sprinkle with mushrooms. Fold over, top with cheese. Place under hot grill until cheese melts. Serve hot garnished with lemon wedges and parsley.

First Prize of £5 to Miss M. Todd, Box 47, Collins St. Post Office, Melbourne.

## FISH FROMAGE

Half pint medium thickness white sauce, 1 finely chopped onion, 1 cup cooked peas, 1 cup flaked fish (home-cooked or tinned), salt and pepper to taste, squeeze lemon juice,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups self-raising flour, pinch salt, 1 tablespoon butter or substitute,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk, 2 tablespoons chopped gherkins,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup grated cheese.

Remove skin and bones from fish. Add to sauce with onion and peas. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and lemon juice; pour into greased pie dish. Sift flour and salt, rub in shortening. Mix to a soft dough with milk. Knead slightly, roll to oblong shape. Sprinkle with chopped gherkins and cheese. Roll up and cut into 8 or 9 slices. Place cut side down on fish mixture. Bake in moderate oven 30 minutes. Serve hot.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. F. Snell, 41 Henry St., Oakleigh, Vic.

## CHERRY GINGER TART

One cooked and cooled 8in. biscuit pastry-case, 1 tablespoon gelatine,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water, 1 cup cold milk,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar, pinch salt, 1 teaspoon vanilla,  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint cream, 1 egg-white beaten to meringue consistency with 2 tablespoons sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup well-drained chopped maraschino cherries (or drained or crystallised cherries with sugar removed),  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup chopped walnuts, 2 tablespoons finely chopped preserved ginger.

Soak gelatine in  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup



FRENCH PANCAKES with spinach filling make an attractive luncheon dish for mid-week guests. Grated cheese sprinkled on top and melted and browned under the grill pops up the flavor. See prizewinning recipe on this page.

water. Heat milk slightly with sugar and salt, add softened gelatine, stir until dissolved. Add vanilla, chill. When beginning to thicken, beat until light and fluffy. Mix stiffly beaten egg-white into whipped cream, fold into gelatine mixture with cherries, walnuts, and ginger. Stir occasionally until beginning to thicken. Fill into pastry-case, chill until set.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. M. Kiddle, Rural Delivery No. 9, Te Puke, New Zealand.

## QUICKLY MADE SALAD DRESSINGS

1.—One egg, 1 teaspoon mustard, 3 dessertspoons sugar, 3 tablespoons water, 3 tablespoons vinegar, 1 dessertspoon butter,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt.

Beat egg, place in saucepan, gradually beat in mustard, then sugar, water, and vinegar. Lastly, add melted butter and salt. Stir over low heat or over boiling water until mixture thickens slightly, but do not allow to boil. Cool before using.

2.—One tablespoon butter, 1 teaspoon mustard, pinch salt, 2 eggs,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk, good  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup vinegar.

Melt butter in saucepan, add mustard and salt, then well-beaten eggs and sugar. Slowly add milk, then vinegar. Stand jug in gently boiling water and stir until thickened. Keeps well, and may be thinned before use with cream or milk.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. F. Mawson, Soho St., Cooma, N.S.W.

## JELLIED LAMB SHAPES

One and a half cups cold minced lamb, 1 tablespoon mayonnaise, 1 dessertspoon finely chopped mint, salt and pepper to taste, 1 tablespoon gelatine, 2 cups clear veal or mutton stock,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cups cooked green peas, hard-boiled egg.

Combine lamb, mayonnaise, and mint. Season to taste. Dissolve gelatine in heated meat stock. Strain through a fine strainer. Place a spoonful of the stock in bottom of each individual mould, allow to set. Place a slice of hard-boiled egg on this and form a pattern with the green peas. Mix remaining stock with balance of peas and minced lamb. Fill each mould with this mixture. Chill until set. Unmould on to a dish and serve with salad vegetables and mayonnaise.

Consolation Prize of £1 to Mrs. A. Lawrence, Neath Ave., Dover Gardens, via Brighton, S.A.

## Kitchen hints

**TRY** making scrambled eggs go farther with creamed peas or spinach, cooked onion and tomato, or just plain breadcrumbs. This trick varies the flavor as well as making more servings.

**TALKING** of spinach—try spoonfuls of cooked spinach dipped in cheese-flavored batter and lightly fried. Particularly good with bacon.

**GARDEN-FRESH** thyme, used sparingly, gives a delicious flavor to creamed onion soup.

**HERE'S** an idea for Saturday night's tea: Fill large, firm tomatoes with soft, moist macaroni cheese. Bake until tomatoes are soft.



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## Weaning baby

By SISTER MARY JACOB, Our Mothercraft Nurse

**WEANING** time usually comes when baby is between eight and nine months old.

If a mother is well and the baby is contented and making good progress, weaning should be delayed until the summer is over.

The change to artificial food is easier in cool weather.

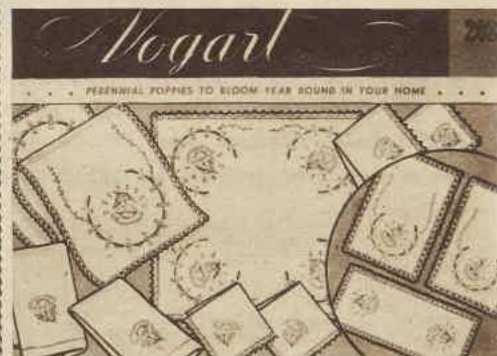
If a child has to be weaned during hot weather the change must be made very gradually, and the new food being intro-

duced into the diet must be carefully prepared and kept.

At first all milk should be brought to the boil quickly and simmered for 10 minutes. When the baby is digesting the milk well, boiling time can be gradually reduced.

A leaflet on this subject can be obtained from The Australian Women's Weekly Mothercraft Service Bureau, Box 4088, G.P.O., Sydney.

A stamped addressed envelope must be enclosed.



ENVELOPE of Vogart transfer pattern No. 208 shows some of the poppy motifs included on this sheet. The transfer is available from our Needlework Department. Price 2/-.

**AMERICAN** Vogart transfers available from our Needlework Department offer the needlewoman something new in the way of embroidery designs.

Shown above is Vogart pattern No. 208, which features a brightly colored poppy motif.

On the pattern sheet, which measures 24in. x 28in., there is a variety of motifs that can be used on many linens.

The designs are specially selected so that only simple embroidery stitches are used and patterns can be completed quickly.

If a pattern is transferred on to fabric in the wrong place, there is no need to worry as it washes out quite easily.

Price of the sheet is 2/-. It may be ordered from our Needlework Department. For address see page 53.



F2903.—After-five dress designed with a low oval neckline, tiny sleeves, and a prettily flared skirt. Sizes: 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½ yds. 36in. material. Price, 3/6.

# Fashion PATTERNS

FASHION PATTERNS and Needlework Notions may be obtained immediately from Fashion Patterns Pty. Ltd., 645 Harris Street, Ultimo, Sydney (postal address Box 8060, G.P.O., Sydney). Tasmanian readers should address orders to 2-22, 46-2, G.P.O., Hobart; New Zealand readers to Box 606, G.P.O., Auckland.

F2960.—Slim-line daytime dress has front-buttoned fastenings and twin skirt pockets. Sizes: 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 3½ yds. 36in. material. Price, 3/6.

F2961.—Cool, low-necked sleeveless summer dress. Sizes: 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 4 yds. 36in. material. Price, 3/6.

F2962.—Softly styled afternoon dress with a bow-tie neckline and puffed-up, above-elbow sleeves. Sizes: 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 5½ yds. 36in. material. Price, 3/6.

## BEGINNER'S PATTERN

F2964.—Beginner's pattern for a small girl's one-piece dress. Sizes: 20in., 23in., 27in., and 31in. lengths for 4, 6, 8, and 10 years. Requires 2½ yds. 36in. material, 1 yd. 4in. lace edging, and 6 yds. ¼in. ribbon. Price, 2/6.



## NEEDLEWORK NOTIONS

No. 579.—GIRL'S SLIP AND PANTIE SET  
The pretty two-piece is obtainable cut out ready to make. The motif on the slip is clearly traced ready to embroider. The material is British cotton, the color choice includes pastel lemon, blue, pink, and green. The lace edge is not applied.  
Slip: Length, 18in. for 2 years, 8/11, postage 6d extra; 20in. for 4 years, 10/11, postage and registration 1/4 extra; 22in. for 6 years, 11/9, postage and registration 1/4 extra; 24in. for 8 years, 12/6, postage and registration 1/4 extra.  
Panties: 2 years, 1/6, postage 4d extra; 4 years, 4/11, postage 4d extra; 6 years, 5/6, postage 1d extra; 8 years, 6/2, postage 1d extra.

No. 580.—DUCHESS SET  
Duchesse set obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider in a pretty floral design. The material choice is a cream Irish linen or a sheer linen in blue, pink, lemon, green, and white. Sizes: Centre mats 17in. x 11in. and smaller mats 8in. x 8in. Price, 3/11, postage 7d extra.

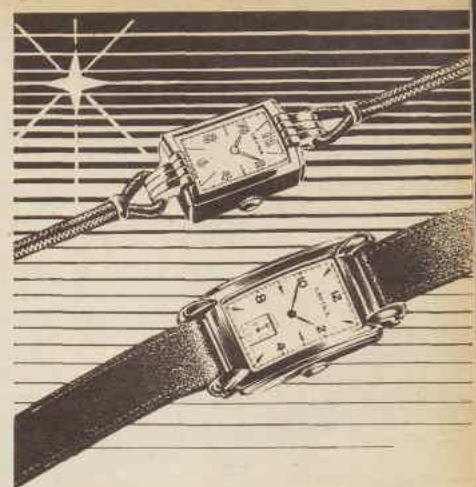
No. 581.—THREE TEA-TOWELS  
The towels have multi-colored borders in red, green, blue, and lemon and are obtainable clearly traced ready to embroider. The material is good-wearing, linen-finished cotton.  
Size, 22in. x 12in. Price, 6/11 each, postage 10d extra. Set of three, 20/3, postage and registration 2/- extra.

No. 582.—GIRL'S DRESS  
A girl's party dress, designed for the 2 to 8 years age groups, features a white pique yoke with a lace trim. The dress is obtainable in striped summer breeze cotton, the color choice includes red and white, blue and white, brown and white, and pink and white. The lace trim and ribbons are not supplied.  
Sizes: 18in. for 2 years, 19/9, postage and registration 1/3 extra; 20in. for 4 years, 22/3, postage and registration 1/6 extra; 22in. for 6 years, 25/6, postage and registration 1/6 extra; 24in. for 8 years, 27/9, postage and registration 1/8 extra.

NOTE: Please make a second color choice. No C.O.D. orders accepted. All Needlework Notions over 8/11 sent by registered post.



F2959.— Perfectly tailored one-piece styled with a flower motif collar trim. Sizes: 32in. to 38in. bust. Requires 4 yds. 36in. material and two flower motifs. Price, 3/6.



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MOP  
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# Mandrake the Magician

**MANDRAKE:** Master magician is surprised when **LOTHAR:** His giant Nubian servant, agrees to play for a professional football team. A group of gamblers plan to kill Lothar during a decisive game when he refuses their bribes and insists on playing.

Suspicious when he sees a gunman on a nearby roof aiming at Lothar, Mandrake hurries to the rescue. **PRINCESS NARDA:** Tells Lothar what is happening, and he leaves the game to help Mandrake. **NOW READ ON:**

MEANWHILE ON THE HIGH ROOF NEAR THE STADIUM—MANDRAKE GESTURES HYPONOTICALLY AT THE GAMBLERS!





# DON'T PUT A COLD IN YOUR POCKET

MY  
SWEETHEART CRIED  
AS I STUFFED A DAMP  
HANKIE IN MY POCKET.  
NOW I'M SMART—  
ONLY SOFT KLEENEX  
DISPOSABLE TISSUES  
FOR ME.  
WIPES OFF HER  
LIPSTICK, TOO.



## "TELL ME ANOTHER" Says KLEENEX

"Perhaps you use Kleenex only for colds  
or removing make-up. Just think of all  
the other uses to which you can put this  
beautifully soft absorbent tissue."



**NO RAZOR'S  
EDGE** TO  
CUT TOWELS,  
NOW I WIPE  
BLADES ON  
KLEENEX.



**I'M SNAP-  
HAPPY!**  
NOW I KNOW KLEENEX  
CLEANS SENSITIVE  
CAMERA LENS WITHOUT  
SCRATCHING LIKE  
LINEN DOES.



## AFTER THE PARTY WAS OVER

I HATE TO CLEAN UP  
AFTER A PARTY...  
I LOATHE SMELLY ASH  
TRAYS... BUT KLEENEX  
KEEPS MY FINGERS FREE OF THEM  
AS I CLEAN AND ALSO MOPS UP SPILLS.

SOLD EVERYWHERE

Try this Delectable

## Salad Mayonnaise



**RECIPE**  
Half tin Nestlé's Sweet-  
ened Condensed Milk,  
1 pt. Salad Oil, 1 pt.  
Vinegar or Lemon Juice,  
2 Egg Yolks, 1 teaspoonful  
of salt, 1 teaspoonful  
of mustard, and a dash of  
Cayenne. Place ingredi-  
ents in a bowl and beat  
well until the mixture  
is thick. That's all. And  
it can be stored in a  
cool place for a very  
long time.



made with  
**NESTLÉ'S  
FULL CREAM  
MILK**

What's salad without mayonnaise?  
But what's mayonnaise without  
Nestlé's Sweetened Condensed Milk?  
Yes, ladies, mayonnaise is doubly  
delicious made with Nestlé's Sweetened  
Condensed Milk. Try it—the whole  
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all the difference. Always insist on  
Nestlé's and make sure you get it.

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## TEENA

GEE WHIZ! FATHERS!!  
HONESTLY! MINE IS JUST  
ABOUT THE LIMIT! THE WAY  
HE'S CARRYING ON SINCE HE  
CAUGHT ME DIVING OFF THE  
HIGH BOARD! IMAGINE! HE  
FORBIDS IT!!!



IT'S NO FUN DIVING  
OFF THE LOW BOARD.



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to make



"RENEE."—Sleeveless, one-piece, styled  
with a white pique yoke accent. The  
material is printed crepe. The color  
choice includes navy, rose, green, maize,  
and blue, all printed with a white  
flower.  
Ready To Wear: Sizes 32in. and 34in.  
bust, 72/6; 36in. and 38in. bust, 76/9.  
Postage and registration, 2/9 extra.  
Cut Out Only: Sizes 22in. and 24in. bust  
49/3; 26in. and 28in. bust, 52/9. Postage  
and registration, 2/9 extra.

"CARMEN."—Button-through, shirt-  
waist dress with rickrack bodice trim.  
The material is check gingham, ob-  
tainable in red and white, blue and  
white, and green and white.  
Ready To Wear: Sizes 22in. and 24in.  
bust, 62/6; 26in. and 28in. bust, 67/2.  
Postage and registration, 3/9 extra.  
Cut Out Only: Sizes 22in. and 24in.  
bust, 49/11; 26in. and 28in. bust, 48/9.  
Postage and registration, 2/9 extra.

NOTE: Please make a  
second color choice. No  
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Steedman's famous powders to  
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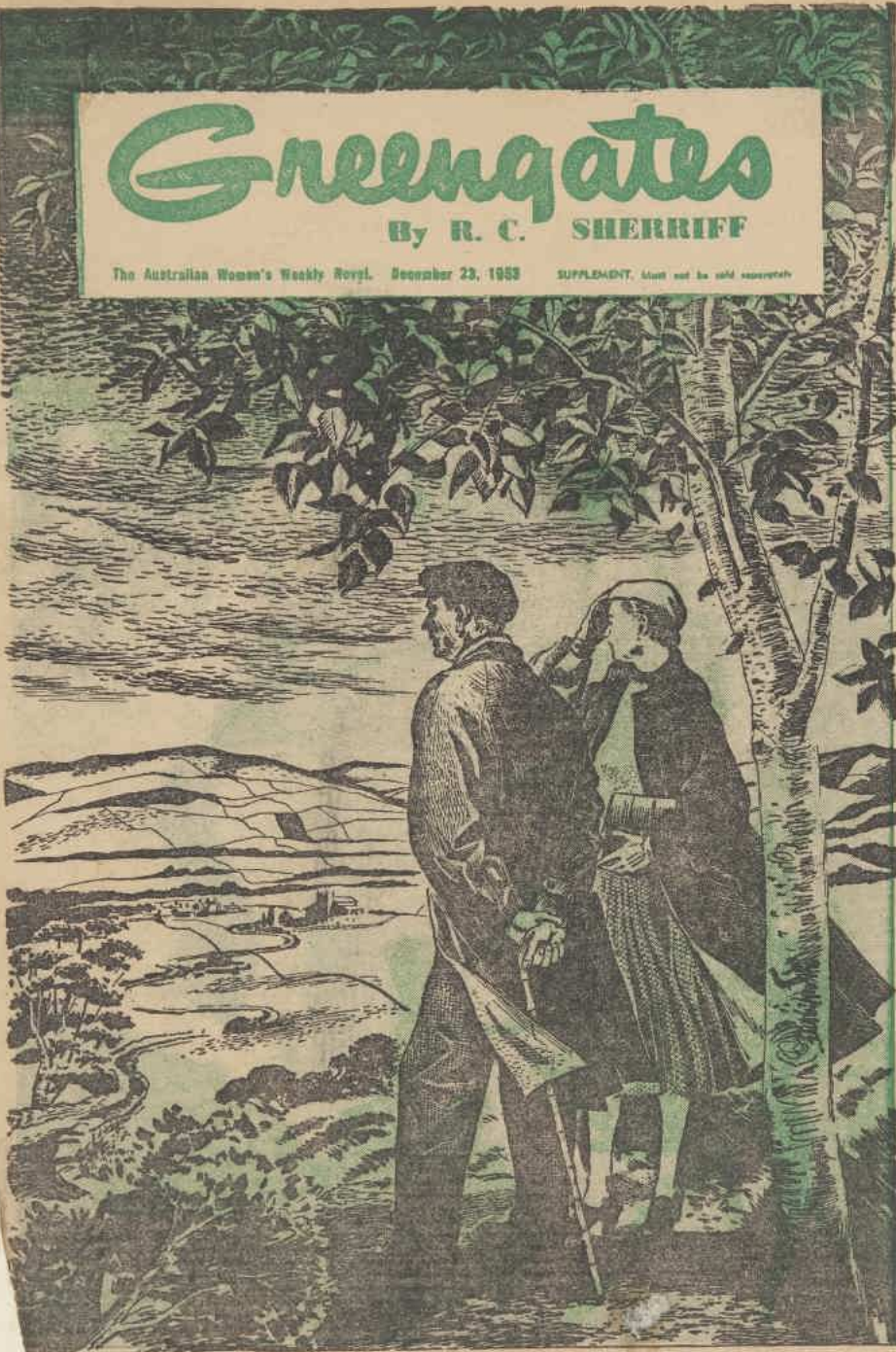


# Greengates

By R. C. SHERRIFF

The Australian Women's Weekly Revue. December 23, 1953

SUPPLEMENT. Must not be sold separately





## GREENGATES

IN frosty days gone by, the chief lunch-hour entertainment for the City of London was the watching of men raise horses that had fallen in Cronhill. Today there is a better supply of sand to keep up the few horses that remain, and the latter has turned to less exciting things.

A workman with an electric drill can command a five-deep audience, a man clicking spoons between his fingers to the music of an organ can do almost as well. Police have to be called to regulate the crowd when the water main bursts, and any old building can draw a mass of sky-gazers during the first dangerous days of its demolition.

On fine days the whole City enjoys a few minutes in the fresh air between the end of lunch and the beginning of the afternoon; but for so short a time the entertainment must be free and the Londoner's principle is that anything is worth watching for nothing, particularly other people in trouble and other people working.

Mr. Baldwin enjoyed his own quiet form of entertainment, and frequently for a few minutes after two o'clock, you would see a slight, well-dressed man, with grey hair and a thoughtful, clean-shaven face, leaning against the parapet of London Bridge, watching the barges unload.

Sometimes, on a fine day, a few boys would perch up on the parapet beside him, eat sandwiches and throw the crusts to the gulls.

But usually he was almost alone, with the river beneath him and the clattering steps of passers-by. He was alone one autumn afternoon, for a raw east wind was blowing up the Thames, a hint of frost lay in the air, and people hurried across the Bridge for the shelter of the narrow streets.

It was not an exciting entertainment at the best of times, but the blue-jeaned, tolling backs on the wharf were a change from those that only moved to toss a few papers into a wire letter basket, and the smell of mud and tar was healthier, to Mr. Baldwin's way of thinking, than floor polish and centrally heated mahogany.

The river had not changed as the streets had changed; they would never change this distant view of Tower Bridge, or the red, muddy swirl, or block out those last remaining stretches of London sky. The Bridge gave command of the open air, in the City you crept like an insect in a run.

The giant cranes on the far side of the river were the only arrivals in recent years. Sometimes Mr. Baldwin crossed the Bridge to watch them slowly raise themselves like stiff, lumbago-stricken monsters, curtsy and drop fat bales of merchandise into open hatches as readily as one would drop a seed into a hole. But generally his conservative eye preferred the blue-jeaned, tolling backs, the skilful twist that took a rolling barrel through a narrow door.

Despite the cold wind he stayed beyond his usual time this afternoon. His lunch hour closed at a quarter past two, but even when he turned and walked away, he hesitated, and wandered down the side streets.

He pictured the whole staff busy at the afternoon's work and the one

empty desk behind the glass screen. He felt like a small boy playing truant, for he rarely failed to be back on the stroke of time. But when Wilson, the Manager, had passed him as he had left for lunch, he had said, "Don't hurry back today."

So Mr. Baldwin loitered against his will. The City still fascinated him: he could still probe into forgotten corners and find unexpected things. It fascinated him but had never made him feel at ease. Every inch of it was too fantastically valuable; the ownership of a few square yards would keep a man in luxury for life and you could not love a piece of land that could bury itself in its own gold.

Every inch of it had been so many times disturbed, so honeycombed with wires and pipes, tunnelled and vaulted, chewed and spat out by mechanical excavators, turned over and built over, fought over and schemed over. Even when they had hollowed out the space for the new office lavatories they had found a Roman Milletone and a wooden water pipe from Cromwell's day. The best Museums of London still lay underground.

NO one appeared to look with unusual interest at Mr. Baldwin as he walked into the office at three o'clock. The Cashiers were busy as they always were on the days following Michaelmas; the telephone was ringing, several clients stood at the rail with papers spread before them—everything was so exactly the same, so normal that he could not avoid a slight sense of disappointment.

A day of such consequence to him might at least have sent a ripple across those bowed, working heads.

As Chief Cashier, he occupied a screened-in corner to himself, but played so large a part in the screens that the official behind them was always known as the goldfish.

His desk was clear of official papers, but it still remained for him to clear out the personal relics that had accumulated there; a strange assortment that had travelled with him from desk to desk in his gradual rise to the screened-in corner; odd things that for some reason or another had not been destroyed or taken home.

Now once and for all he had got to decide what to do with his Menu of the Staff Jubilee Dinner, held at Gatti's so long ago. It had been too valuable to destroy but too dangerous to take home, for Denny had been on the staff in those days, and Denny had become a famous black-and-white artist a few years later.

Amongst the high-spirited after-dinner scribbles on the Menu card was an authentic, early Denny—unfortunately somewhat indecent. To rub it out would have been vandalism, to take it home and risk Edith seeing it would have been unthinkable, and so it had lain amongst this jettam, dusty and fading, for thirty-six years.

It occurred to Mr. Baldwin that one of the Juniors might like to have it, but there would be no purpose in giving it away unless he pointed out the reason for its value, and to do

that would scarcely be in keeping with his position as Chief Cashier.

The card was still creased where he had folded it for his pocket on that distant night; it had been his first Dinner; he had been in the office five years and he was to marry Edith in the summer. Hultres—Potage Russe—Whitebait—Duckling—somebody had scrawled here, "Where are you going when this is over?"

He tried to decipher the names, and the misty pencil scrawls took misty form—ghosts in high collars—in frock coats that dangled to boot heels hitched to the crossbars of absurdly high stools; flickering gas jets over each office desk, a baking heat from fifty jets when a pea-soup fog demanded lights all day. A curious crowd round the first telephone, touching it as if it were a bomb—a whiskered Messenger screwing down a copying book in a machine that looked like Caxton's printing press—pulling out clanny, sodden letters, folding them and stamping them. The Queen was nearly seventy and they used to wonder how much longer the head of a girl would appear on her lilac postage stamps.

The office itself had scarcely changed, except for the central heating and the electric light. The Management prided itself upon its old foundation and tried to retain the atmosphere of the past. The door was the same that the merry party had used on their way up West for the Gatti's Dinner, but they had climbed on to a growing iron-rimmed omnibus, young Mr. Baldwin beside the driver, with a lamp-lit view of a swaying tail and sweating haunches.

Everybody above the rank of office boy had worn a top hat in those times, and a woman in the City was as rare as a horse today. And the streets themselves: swirls of dust on an August evening; a mire on a winter night; unbelievably quiet when the staff worked late at overtime. Now and then the clip-clop of a hansom, taking a City Magnate to the station, so near to yesterday that the closing of the eyes brought back the very sounds.

He laid the Menu card aside, for despite years of indecision he still had a few more minutes to decide its fate. These casually collected relics linked themselves together and formed a panorama. He propped up the lid of his desk for he did not want anyone to see what he was doing.

There were a few picture postcards from men on their holidays: Bexhill, Lowestoft—one from an adventurer who had gone to Guernsey; a report of an Inter-Office Chess Match, kept for its record of "T. H. Baldwin, I. F. Cass, O"—report of an Office Cricket Match: "Baldwin, run out 3." There was a cigarette picture of Mornington Cannon, the jockey, a few fossilised pieces of india-rubber and a sweep-stake ticket.

Amongst the fluff and cake crumbs in a corner there lay a small splinter of anti-aircraft shell that he had picked up in the doorway but he office. He destroyed the papers but he dropped the splinter into his pocket.

There was a musty sentiment about old papers that was best forgotten, but the sentiment of this jagged gilt-



tering piece of steel was of another kind. It confured up cold starlight nights of loneliness, with whistle and truncheon. When for a few dark hours he had been a different kind of man from the Baldwin who had defeated P. Cass at chess and the Baldwin run out for three in the office cricket match.

He scraped a few nibs and paper clips together, dropped them into an envelope and put them in his pocket. The desk was empty, he lowered the lid and was surprised to see Henslip the Messenger just closing the main doors. He had been dreaming in his desk for over half an hour, but he was glad the time had passed so quickly.

He knew exactly what was going to happen now. Strictly speaking it was a secret shared by the staff and withheld from him alone, but he had shared the secret with the others so many times in the past that it could not hold any surprise for him now.

First of all, Henslip the Messenger disappeared into the Manager's room. Then he emerged, went downstairs and returned with a small brown-paper parcel. After another short disappearance he re-emerged and passed with a furtive importance from one member of the staff to another whispering something to each.

Each member of the staff, upon receiving the whisper, glanced curiously towards Mr. Baldwin's desk, slid off his stool and disappeared into the Manager's room.

He saw the file of downstairs from the typewriting rooms and follow the men. Gradually the office emptied until Mr. Baldwin sat alone behind his glass screen. Then there was a hitch. The telephone rang. Henslip hurried with an impatient grunt to answer it, and called out, "Mr. Robbins!—Somebody wants to report a Fire Claim!"

A harassed Junior came out of the Manager's room, and for a few moments Mr. Baldwin sat listening to words that seemed now to eddy back from the past. "Yes—I see—curtain blew into candle flame—have you got your policy number?—Never mind. I'll turn it up. I'll send you a Claim Form. Good-bye."

Henslip was fidgeting outside the telephone box. He hustled the Junior back to the Manager's room and crossed the silent office to Mr. Baldwin's desk.

"Will you come into Mr. Wilson's room, sir?"

Mr. Baldwin looked up from an almanack with an attempt at surprise.

"Yes. All right. I'll come now." He was glad to feel so calm and controlled, for he had been dreading this moment for days. He waited until Henslip had gone, then tore the Gattis Menu into little squares and threw them into the fire as he passed on his way to the Manager's room. It seemed to be the right and only moment to destroy it.

Mr. Wilson had a spacious, cheerful room, flooded with sunlight on fine mornings, for its windows were upon a wide street with low buildings opposite. Now the lights were on and above the buildings lay a green strip of smoky sky.

On the mantelpiece stood a photograph of Mr. Wilson's wife for it was a custom of successive Managers to have some personal decoration in this room. At one time Mr. Baldwin had had visions of a photograph of Edith standing there, but things had not worked out that way.

The whole staff, men and girls, were grouped round the walls and Mr. Wilson stood behind his desk, his tea tray pushed aside to make way for the brown-paper parcel.

"Are we all here?"

"Yes, sir," said Henslip, closing the door.

It was embarrassing for people who know each other to stand together in a crowd. Young ones, unused to the ceremony, shuffled, looking down at their feet or at their fingernails, older ones sized with bland smiles at Mr. Baldwin, the sort of smiles used at weddings, turned on very carefully to half pressure to prevent them wearing out too soon.

Mr. Baldwin took up his position a little in front of the rest, like a prisoner about to hear a sentence at Court Martial. He smiled feebly at Mr. Wilson, then lowered his eyes to the edge of the Manager's desk. A coal popped in the fire, and there was silence. Then Mr. Wilson cleared his throat and began.

"Mr. Baldwin. The staff has asked me to hand you this little souvenir on the occasion of your retirement. I need hardly say what a sad occasion it is for us although I'm sure it's a very happy one for you. We shall miss you, for although we may be able to fill your official position we cannot replace your personality."

There were some appreciative murmurs, and Mr. Wilson turned to the staff.

"Mr. Baldwin has given honorable service on our staff for forty-one years. He could tell us some interesting stories of the naughty nineties if he wanted to—even of the eighties too! There's no need for me to enlarge upon Mr. Baldwin's virtues; for they are known to you all. The office will remember him as a loyal and devoted servant."

He turned back to Mr. Baldwin. "We wish you, Mr. Baldwin, many years of the happiness and leisure that you so justly deserve, and we hope you will often come in and see us. We ask you to accept this little present as a token of our esteem."

Mr. Wilson waited for the polite applause to die away, then drew aside the brown paper and revealed a neat square clock in varnished oak. He picked it up with a smile and put it down again on the corner of the desk nearest Mr. Baldwin.

It was Mr. Baldwin's turn. He took a step forward, his fingers fumbled the clock as he turned to face the staff. He did not feel like Mr. Baldwin at all, he was a strange, light-headed person who had some vague connection with a Mr. Baldwin in the past, who began to recite words that this Mr. Baldwin had taught him.

"Mr. Wilson, Ladies and Gentlemen. I really can't tell you how much I value this lovely present. I shall always keep it to remind me of the days in the old office, because they've been good days. I'm sorry they're over, and I'm going to miss you all. It's very kind of you to think of giving me such a beautiful present. Thank you very much... very much indeed."

The short speech, with its abrupt close took everybody by surprise and there was an awkward little silence before Mr. Wilson nodded to Henslip to open the door. The telephone began calling out like a spoilt child annoyed at being left alone; someone hurried off to soothe it, the girls and the Juniors edged along the walls and disappeared.

Some of the senior men shook hands with Mr. Baldwin; others, less senior, merely did. Gradually the room emptied and Mr. Baldwin was alone with the Manager.

He had never felt at ease with Wilson. Five years Mr. Wilson's senior, it had been difficult for him when

this tall, puckered man arrived from the Head Office to take command.

"Well, Baldwin—you're a gentleman of leisure now!"

"Yes," said Mr. Baldwin with a faint smile.

"What are you going to do with yourself?"

"Oh, there's a good many things been waiting for this to happen. Garden, you know—and books to read—and hobbies—"

"That's right. Hobbies are the thing."

Henslip the Messenger tapped at the door and peeped in.

"Shall I do the clock up for you, Mr. Baldwin?"

"Yes, do please—Henslip."

The Manager himself took the clock across to Henslip and Mr. Baldwin followed with the paper and string.

"I'll do a stronger bit of string than that," said Henslip.

The Manager turned back into the room and offered Mr. Baldwin a cigarette.

"Don't forget to look us up sometimes."

"Certainly," replied Mr. Baldwin, knowing quite well that retired members of the staff were a curse when they came wandering round, wasting people's time.

"Is your wife keeping well?"

"Quite."

"That's good."

The Manager's eyes were upon a pile of letters waiting for his signature, and Mr. Baldwin held out his hand.

"Well, good-bye, Mr. Wilson. Thanks for the nice things you said in that speech."

Mr. Wilson smiled. "I meant it. Well, good-bye."

He met one of the Juniors as he went downstairs for his overcoat and hat: a pleasant lad who lived somewhere out in the country and had an hour's train journey to get home. He stopped, flashed a smile at Mr. Baldwin and said, "We're going to miss you a lot, sir—the way you always help us."

The boy played football on Saturday afternoons and Mr. Baldwin had sometimes helped him to get away sharp at one o'clock by taking a bundle of letters from him and doing them up himself.

"We've just been saying downstairs how decent you've been to us..."

Thanks... The boy's library book slid from under his arm and clattered on the stairs, there was a dive for it... a laugh... a flustered handshake... a cold hand, still damp from washing.

"Don't be silly," said Mr. Baldwin.

"I've never done anything."

"You've done lots and we're going to miss you. Don't forget to come in and see us sometimes, sir." Another smile and the boy was gone. Something flew up and stung Mr. Baldwin at the back of his nose and he hastened downstairs to the lavatories.

A little later, with a neat brown parcel under his arm, he rumbled the main door to and joined the broad stream of home-goers. The last moments in the office had seemed unreal to him, but everything was cool and normal here: the same brown, shining street—the same swinging of umbrellas and bobbing of white folded newspapers—the same plant buildings filled with light—the same deep murmur—the same narrow strips of remote, unnoticed sky.

When a man retires, and time is no longer a matter of urgent importance, his colleagues generally present him with a clock. But the important irony is balanced by an equally unpleasant appropriateness, for while a man in retirement is no longer governed by hours and minutes, he very frequently wants to know the time.

Mr. Baldwin felt unreasonably self-



conscious standing on Broad Street platform with the clock under his arm. Although it was done up in brown paper and nobody could possibly guess what it was, he could not help feeling that a placard reading "RETIRED!" hung round his neck.

The crowd around him, companions of a thousand journeys, seemed detached and remote from him now. The bond that had held him to them had snapped at four o'clock when the door of the office closed. His spirit was no longer with them; but his body would have to stand amongst them on the platform and sit amongst them in the train until a porter called out "Brondesbury Park!"

He was glad when the train came in, and the clock with his hat on top of it lay on the luggage rack above his head.

An elderly man in the far corner had also placed a parcel on the luggage rack, and Mr. Baldwin wondered whether he, too, had received a clock that afternoon. Then the man leant forward and began a vigorous conversation with a friend.

Mr. Baldwin caught the words "stocktaking next week . . . late evenings . . . more business in the spring," and he knew that the old man's parcel contained no clock; he could not make him a spiritual companion for the journey home. All these other passengers, the old man included, would go to the City tomorrow morning and be on this train tomorrow night. With a deepening loneliness he opened his evening paper.

The train drew out and side-stepped clumsily across the points. The chilly night had been observed by the railway authorities, and they had caused a stuffy metallic smell to ooze in warm clouds from beneath the seat and up Mr. Baldwin's trouser legs. He watched the familiar electric signs pass by for his last inspection and began to realise how little he had prepared himself for what had happened this afternoon.

Freedom — leisure: they were words for inspiration, and he was like an old canary with its cage door open, crocheting on the furthest end of its perch. He had made no plans. If he had thought of it at all he had rarely planned anything beyond an extra half hour in bed and a morning in the garden, but mostly he had put the matter uneasily from his mind.

Retirement, he had told himself, could take care of itself when it came. It meant decay: the beginning of the end and he had no desire to premeditate it.

But now he began to think as a marooned man might think as he calculates the time his food will last. There was his scrap-book with a good many cuttings waiting to be stuck in; a picture frame to repair and some drawers to clear out; there was the garden; an afternoon walk and books he had been waiting to read.

He had been given his reward for forty years of work. He had yearned a thousand times for freedom, and now that it had come he was afraid of it. It was the fear of a man who, having habitually enjoyed two apples a day, is suddenly called upon to eat six in the same period.

He was a man of method; he had planned his leisure in such a way that its whole span was comfortably filled — no part being overcrowded and no part empty. Home usually at six, there was a half-hour's rest and talk with Edith a walk until dinner-time, his diary, business and books from then until bed, with a visit to the pictures once a week and an occasional theatre in the West End.

For Saturday afternoons there was always a football match to watch in the Park and for Sundays there was the garden, tea with friends and some

pleasant, aimless pottering. In the past, without a moment's boredom, he had comfortably enjoyed four hours of leisure each day; his problem was how to dispose of twelve.

If he were an old man he could doze away the extra hours before the fire, but he was not an old man; he was only fifty-eight.

He decided to postpone the problem until after dinner and turned again to his paper. There was nothing of special interest on the first page and he was just about to fold it over to the centre when his eye caught a small headline and paragraph in the lower right-hand corner —

#### "TRAGEDY OF RETIREMENT"

It hit him in the stomach and dried his mouth. His eyes jerked away and strove to make a panic-stricken escape through the maze of print above; but they came to blind alleys; a morbid curiosity clutched at them and tried to draw them back.

A DEVILISH spirit broods over newspapers at certain times: a spirit that records "Death from Gnat Bite" on the morning a man wakes up with a small red lump on his wrist—that tells of diphtheria epidemic in the village he is on his way to for his holiday. Mr. Baldwin fumbled the paper—tried to turn it over and lose himself in other news—but in his heart he knew that defeat was ahead.

Even if he kept his eyes from the paragraph he would never have the strength to throw the paper away; he might put it in a drawer at home and return to it like a murderer to his crime; he might torture himself for weeks but read it in the end. He accepted the inevitable, and lowered his eyes.

An inquest was held this morning on the body of John Herbert Stoner, 31, a retired Civil Servant, of 97 Lincoln Road, Ruislip, who was found hanging to a beam in his garage last Friday. It was stated that the deceased was a strong, healthy man, but since his retirement two years ago had become very depressed, lost interest in things, worried over imaginary troubles. His wife stated that he had no hobbies.

The coroner, in returning a verdict of suicide while temporarily insane, said that tragedies due to retirement were increasing.

Mr. Baldwin lowered the paper. He felt better for having faced it. In an unexpected way he felt happier. There was no madness in his family; in any case, he had no garage and no beam, and he would never dare abuse the gas oven while Ada ruled the kitchen.

He had read the ultimate most pitiful thing that could happen from retirement, and gained strength from it. He pitied Mr. Stoner — and despised him. He had killed himself through not knowing how to live; he had been picked out of eternity, given a tiny moment of precious light and blotted it out with a rope over a garage beam: a sordid, pitiful crime.

And near by, as though by design, another paragraph caught his eye. It was about a general celebrating his 78th birthday by unveiling a memorial to his former victories, and it noted the fact that he had retired from active service at the age of 64 . . .

Mr. Baldwin turned his face from the yellow atmosphere of the carriage to the cold, dark, fleeting things outside. Inspiration gripped him and overwhelmed him. Fate had shown him the first paragraph to test his courage; and now it had pointed to this other, and left him in silence to think. It pointed a way, threw open doors, and shafts of exultant light rushed in.

A splendid thing had happened: he was still a young man — well under sixty — fit and healthy — keen on things; keener than ever in his life — and he was gloriously free, with a pension and at least fifteen years of full activity before him.

An hour ago he was thinking of retirement as the first step into the grave: the leisure promised for forty years had turned to a mockery — had come too late — he had dreaded it, faced it and accepted it, and now he was filled with a fierce, defiant happiness.

The golden age for a man who had lived wisely lay between sixty and seventy-five. Men had climbed from the valleys to the mountain tops in that time. He thought of Gladstone returned to power at 70 and still a great Prime Minister at 83 — dozens of others — Shaw, at 70, writing masterpieces, and here was he, coming home to retirement, thinking about one foot in the grave at 58!

It was the fashion to think of retired City clerks as finished and done with at 60 — fit for nothing but doddering into the Park and dozing over the fire. No more was expected of them: their pens were taken away; they were sent home and forgotten. He would show people that there was more to it than armchairs, slippers and memories.

In his stark excitement he crossed his legs, kicked the man opposite and apologised more heartily than he had ever apologised before.

The train took wings and plunged through the night; his retirement was not going to be a hopeless chloroforming of time. Instead of a "Tragedy of Retirement," he would supply the Press with a novel headline when his time came: "Man who achieved Fame after retirement from City."

He would then take stock of himself: then make his plans. "I've a sound, clear brain; a tough, steady health, and no delusions. I know quite well that I am not a genius, but that is all to the good. If genius were to flame out at 58 I would probably be certified."

"My course is quite clear: instead of dabbles in anemic hobbies with the cheerless object of killing time, I will select one aim: one intense purpose, concentrate my whole mind and every ounce of enthusiasm upon it and work my way to recognition."

"Anything against it?—Any reason why I shouldn't?"

Why did not other retired City men of fifty-eight, with the bonds of an irksome job broken and a pension at their backs, adventure down the roads of burning inclination? Because they never thought about it. Because they were too tired or lazy. Because they accepted the feeble tradition that retirement meant the end.

Nobody seemed to realise that the idea of sending men to retirement at fifty-eight or sixty was an antiquated tradition going back to the days when life ended ten years earlier than it did today. Retiring age had not been advanced to meet the times but men still accepted it in its old worn-out meaning.

"I was the pioneer. I blazed the trail: I was the first man to show that in these great days of going grandmothers, men too can take advantage of the new meadows of fertile life that science has reclaimed from the marshes of disease!"

That would be a good thing to say at one of his lectures, for one day he might be hailed as the man who invented a new grafting operation. One day it would become the normal thing for every man to graft a new and fascinating career upon the broken stump of his dull City life.



As the train left Camden Town he settled himself to the exciting business of selecting his new vocation. One or two people had got out, and he could stretch his legs and think better.

He ruled out at once the professions that demand a life's apprenticeship. Even if he wanted to be a lawyer, or a doctor or an architect it was too late, and he had no regrets. Men had gone into the Church at sixty, but the Church demanded qualities he could not claim. Astronomy?—a short cut to fame was to discover a new star with a home-made telescope.

It was an idea worth thinking about he had read books of popular astronomy and been fascinated, but the practice demanded mathematics which he detested. He would not be an astronomer. Science? No. Literature? No. You had to grow up with literature and have something you specially wanted to write about. Geology?—Browsing upon hillside?—He was getting warm.

He had known all along what he was coming to but he wanted to test his choice by deliberately throwing other possibilities in the way. He wanted to whittle things down to the one fascinating thing that had always lurked in the backgrounds of his mind. He would become an Historian. Not merely a frivole one but one who went out and explored and discovered.

It offered a glorious fullness to winter evenings and sunlit days. There were a thousand fascinating books to study—a thousand earth-works on the downs of England, Roman fortresses and Norman castles. Very few of them had been properly explored. The whole pageant lay ready for him.

In dark evenings by the fire he would study, make notes and draw conclusions; in the summer he would plan excursions with Edith to his typical sites. He could begin with short articles that would throw new light upon obscure questions, bringing him into touch with men of his own enthusiasm—there to more important work, full-sized books—lectures.

He began to plan his time, no longer how to fill it but how to fit everything in.

First came health. He could afford the extra half hour in bed that made all the difference between a sleep-clogged morning and a clear brain. He could allow an extra five minutes in dressing that enhanced the self-respect; the extra five minutes essential to the full enjoyment of a herring. Half an hour with the paper to keep abreast with the times, and then the garden.

He had clung to the garden until now as the one straw that would keep him floating above dark pools of terrifying leisure. Now the garden would take its place as a subsidiary thing—a hobby for healthy, take-with great interest thrown in.

He would reinvigorate that bald, worn-out patch behind the house, re-fertilise it with clean chemical manures—coax that sickly laurel hedge into a billowing green gift to privacy; dig and plant and perspire in the open air, wash and lunch.

Edith would enjoy his retirement. Lunch together would be far pleasanter than her frugal little lunch alone. He had forgotten what a difference his retirement would make to Edith, for the brief companionship of weekends and evenings had never been enough.

But it would be in the afternoon, and in the quietness of the night

when, free from the weariness of a day in the City, he would settle down to work on his new career. It would be for those long quiet hours to prove that a man is not finished and done with when he retires from a City office.

The long quiet hours that would lay the foundations for fascinating summer days. "Ladies and Gentlemen, I have much pleasure in introducing Mr. Thomas Baldwin, who is going to tell us of his fascinating discoveries at Pevensey Castle. As you all know, Mr. Baldwin has—" "Brondesbury Park!"

Brondesbury Park? He started up, dazed and blinking. Only four passengers remained: four devils who would have to get up in the dark tomorrow morning, drag themselves to the station and go to the City to another day of dreary work. In the evening they would travel back once more: sit wedged together in this stuffy, metallic air. Backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards for years—poor fellow prisoners.

One or two glanced up at Mr. Baldwin as he rose. They did not realise that he was saying good-bye; that his sentence was over. An hour ago his release had seemed but the opening of a door that led to another, even drearier cell. Now he had discovered a different, secret way that led to sunlit horizons—to quivering fields of new, exciting life.

He reached for his hat—a parcel under it?—of course, they had given him a clock!

Stars of frost glittered on the platform and crunched under foot. He trotted up the steps, said "Good night" to the ticket collector and turned down the dark, tree-lined road that led to his home.

The wind had fallen, and a gathering fog was rusting the lights in the avenue that led from the main road. The stream of passengers trickled away in different directions, and Mr. Baldwin and a solitary boy with a small bag were the only ones to turn off into Brondesbury Terrace. The boy disappeared into the second gate.

Mr. Baldwin's house lay a hundred yards further on, with a lamp-post in front of it that gave a glow to its placid brown face.

THE house "Grunere," was Mr. Baldwin's own freehold property, purchased by him for £700 as a result of a legacy from an uncle.

He had lived there as a tenant for fifteen years before he became its owner, so it had been his home for the greater part of his career. It was a nice, semi-detached house of brown brick, relieved in front by a few quiet, lozenge patterns in red and blue; a tall, thin house with a slate roof and gothic chimneys.

Ada, their servant for the past seventeen years, inhabited its two perpendicular extremities—the basement kitchen and the attic bedroom.

The dining-room, with bow windows upon the road, communicated by sliding doors with the drawing-room, and French windows opened from there on to the garden by way of an ironwork balcony and a few steps. An old-fashioned uncomplaining house that had never been spattered to discontent by better things in its neighborhood.

Mr. Baldwin hitched the clock firmly under his arm to open the gate. For some months past the front gate had been opening with increasing difficulty, with a resentful squeak that robbed the doorbell of all importance. He made a mental note of the gate as one of the things he would

now have time to attend to. He could save a good deal by setting aside half an hour a day for minor repairs.

He heard his wife's familiar "All right, Ada!" as he rang the bell. The basement stairs had begun to trouble Ada of recent years and they were in the habit of saving her the climb when they knew for certain who was at the door.

Edith stood under the hall light, and Mr. Baldwin gave her the traditional kiss. She gave no sign to suggest that this was not just another ordinary homecoming on a late autumn night.

"Was there much fog in the City? It's been coming up here since ten-time." She looked out for a moment before she closed the door.

"Nothing to speak of," said Mr. Baldwin. "It began to look bad at lunch time, but it cleared up. The late trains are going to catch it."

He hung up his hat, dropped his umbrella into the stand, and with the parcel under his arm went into the dining-room without removing his coat. There was a faint perfume; a big fire was blazing, and a smell of warm leather came from the front of the armchair.

The room was at its best in the winter warmth, for the sun had a way of pointing out things that the standard lamp forgave. The sun made the purple velvet mantelpiece cover look like a cloak at an open-air pageant; the lamp gave it back its dignity.

Mr. Baldwin put the parcel on the table beside Edith's work-basket. He stood casually beside it and Edith came and peered at it over her glasses.

"Got your scissors handy?"

"What is it, Tom?"

"Just a little thing the staff gave me. You open it."

He went into the passage and took longer than usual to remove his overcoat. He wanted her to enjoy the surprise by herself. He heard the rustling of paper, judged his time, and returned.

"Isn't that awfully nice!—it's so neat and simple."

She put it on the table and stepped back to admire it. The old walnut-wood pendulum clock on the mantelpiece, with its round, keyhole eyes, stared in mild curiosity at the quick-ticking newcomer—reassured itself and continued its placid beat without further interest.

It was a doleful clock at the best of times, but it looked at its worst at twenty-five past six, when its hands gave it a dreary, drooping moustache.

"What an awfully nice thing to have done. Wasn't it a surprise? Weren't you pleased?"

"They all gave something towards it," said Mr. Baldwin. There was no point in telling her that everybody got a clock when they retired.

"We'll have to find a nice place for it. Where do you think?"

"That's what I've been wondering," said Mr. Baldwin. "We can't move that old chap up there."

"And the one in the drawing-room matches the other things."

It was a problem. The normal clock-space of the house was filled.

"What about the bedroom?" he suggested.

"Yes. We could easily have it there. It's got a nice, quiet tick. I expect it's Swiss."

"It's the latest thing," returned Mr. Baldwin. He wondered what Edith was really thinking, for in his own heart he was disappointed. The price mattered nothing, but for a man in his position it might have been a little better: it was such a "local" affair, so obviously subscribed to by the people at his Branch alone.



There were dozens of men now working at the Head Office and at other Branches who had at one time or another worked with him. It would not have cost much time or trouble to invite them to subscribe their small expression of regard. He must have given three times its value in his time towards other men's retiring and wedding presents. He shook off the sordid thought and turned to the fire.

The room was warm, the curtains drawn—Edith's chair was drawn up as usual to the table so that she could do her work beneath the light. His armchair stood ready for him with his slippers beside it. Everything was the same: Edith was the same, for beyond speaking of the clock she had asked no questions. He was determined to tell her nothing for the time being of the plans he had made in the train, for although she always encouraged him in the things he did, he knew that she did not share his fascination for the past.

If, on a holiday, he pointed to a ruined castle she was only fascinated by its frame of nature: the noble trees and the sky beyond it. The ruins meant little to her in themselves: she did not share his gift of breathing life into the dead relics of endeavor, of conjuring clattering hoofs from the space where a drawbridge once spanned a grass-grown moat.

He would begin his work alone, and draw her gently into it as time went by. If success and recognition came to him, then her pride would be his chief reward.

He spread his knees to the warmth of the fire: the first fog signal of the evening crunched in the distance. It was very still and quiet outside. Through a chink in the curtain he could see the grizzled crown of the laurel hedge that he was going to rejuvenate.

Edith, by the table, had put her work-basket on a chair beside her and was counting stitches in a low whisper, just loud enough to let him know that he need not talk unless he wished to. The clock on the mantelpiece ticked sonorously with its pendulum. The new clock on the table ticked with the hurry and lightness of a sparrow's heart.

As a rule they talked freely during the half hour between Mr. Baldwin's arrival home and his walk before dinner. Edith would detail the domestic events of the day; he would tell her of incidents in the office and adventures in the train. He understood why Edith was silent now, for just as he had always avoided thinking about his retirement so it had become their habit never to allude to it.

They had carried on during the past week as if his retirement had been thirty years away: the matter had not even been mentioned at breakfast that morning, and Edith could have no idea what he was feeling now that it had happened. She might be expecting him to burst into song; she might equally expect a flood of tears.

It was clearly up to him to say something, but the more he thought, the less there was to say—he had cleared up his desk; at four o'clock he had retired: they had given him a clock and he had come home.

He gave an artificial yawn and drummed his fingers on the arm of his chair.

"Well, it's all over." Edith did not look up from her work. "It must have been a funny day."

He gave a short laugh and poked the fire. "It was rather. Quite ordinary, really. That was the funny part."

She lowered her work and drew the clock towards her. "It's nice to have this—to know they wanted to give you something."

He turned his head, and caught the soft, dark profile of her face beneath the lamp. Edith meant home, the City meant work, and he had thought of them as rigidly apart. But suddenly they wove themselves together: he knew that the office had been almost as much her life as his and that she would feel its loss. She had shared his thoughts, and hopes, and disappointments.

The gossip he had brought home each night must have built a little French officer in her mind, staffed by men he talked about, buzzing with the incidents he told her of, furnished with a queer jumble of brass rails and mahogany pulpits and patches of mosaic floor: things distorted by memory, and by the shy, bewildered eyes that saw them.

**I**N the early days, Edith had occasionally called for him at the office before going on to a theatre. Of late years he had preferred her not to face the turmoil of the City alone, but he remembered her face as she used to sit waiting on the leather window seat, the awed, wondering eyes that roved round the brass filigees and polished partitions: the quick jerk of her head as one man called across to another: the furtive peepings at men whom she knew were his friends but whose names she did not know.

He had tried to identify them afterwards—"That fat man with the big moustache—his Burtonshaw—"Who was the tall man sitting near the fire?"—"Oh, that was Watson—you know—the man I told you about who plays tennis well."—"Oh, that's Mr. Watson!—I pictured him quite different somehow."

Mr. Baldwin shifted his chair a little, and with his eyes on her needlework, began to talk.

"Funny how it was just like any other day. You know—the going up in the train—the getting there—hanging up my hat and coat and going to my desk. Couldn't somehow believe I was doing it for the last time. One of two agents who knew I was going dropped in to shake hands. Then there was lunch just the same—"

"What did you have?"

Such an ordinary, everyday Edith asked the question that Mr. Baldwin had to stop to collect himself. It was such a regular, nightly question of hers that it was necessary to reassure himself that he had not dozed and dreamt his retirement; that he was not sitting back in his armchair at the end of an ordinary day—with an ordinary day ahead. It even made him forget what he had had for lunch.

"Let's see—what was it? Oh—stewed steak, sprouts, and baked potatoes."

"You're always having stewed steak lately."

"They do it very well at the Unicorn. Then cheese, and coffee."

Once started, there was plenty enough to say. He told her everything that had happened after lunch: from his stroll to London Bridge until the end. When he came to the clearing out of his desk he was reminded of something; he dived into his pocket and produced the fragment of anti-aircraft shell.

"That brings back memories!" Edith looked at it in curiosity. It took her a little while to realise what it was.

"He told her about the presentation so lightly and casually that he might have been an onlooker instead of the

principal figure. The time flew by: Edith had turned her chair to the fire and so absorbed were they that neither noticed Ada come in to lay the dinner until a wheezy cough disturbed them.

"Where shall I put this?" She was holding the new clock in her hands as though it were a box of spiders.

"Oh—on the sideboard, Ada. We're going to put it in our bedroom."

Anything new that came into the house was an irritant to Ada's ordered mind, and it remained an irritant until it had found a settled place. She indicated quite clearly by the way she carried it that she did not consider it had a decent shape for a clock.

Ada herself looked rather like a plump but sombre Christmas cracker in her stiff, billowy uniform and even stiffer starched apron: the bow that secured the apron behind looked the stiffest thing of all. She put the clock on the sideboard and eyed it defensively before she turned to lay the cloth, as though she half expected it to say something cheeky.

Her arrival to set dinner was the signal for Mr. Baldwin to go for his walk. As Edith went upstairs to tidy herself she paused at the landing window to watch her husband, with his hat at a jaunty angle, swing out of the gate, whistling a tune. He looked up and down, deciding upon his route: she saw him switch his walking stick and stride off into the fog-streaked night.

She felt inexorably happy and relieved. He had behaved wonderfully and far beyond her wildest hopes: she had even been prepared that night to open the door to an old and broken man: instead had come a buoyant, youthful figure, ten years younger than the man who had gone for his morning train.

It delighted her, but puzzled her a little. He had told her everything as though he were describing something that had happened to some other man; he had not mentioned his plans for the future as though they, too, were no concern of his and belonged to someone else.

But if she were certain of one thing it was that his mood was not artificial and forced: she knew that he was not just throwing a brave face upon an inward fear: she knew him well enough to know that he was genuinely happy and she wished now that she had bought the chicken that Sainsbury's had recommended, and made a celebration dinner of it. As it was she had played for safety with cutlets and stewed pears. But it was not too late to change into her velvet dress.

She turned on the light, drew the blinds and began her preparations for dinner with a thankful jubilant heart.

When dinner was over, and Edith had gone up to bed, Mr. Baldwin settled himself by the fire and took a final wander round the past before he locked the door and threw away the key. It hardly seemed decent to allow the future to bubble so gaily and noisily before the past had received a proper, reverent burial, so he draped his mind in respectful sentiment, and sent it quickly away to pay its homage.

Best were the early football days, lost almost in a mist as the ball was lost towards the end of a winter game: the hurry to be off on a Saturday morning; the sandwiches munched behind the lid of a desk: the journey out to the fields—the mud, the dusk, the glow from washing off the mud and the frowny limb-



stretched journey home. Winter billiards tournaments: the Lord Mayor's Show from the office window: cricket matches and sweep-stakes.

The office had returned his services in things besides money, for it had given him friends, and life with them outside the office doors. Even if there were no great moments to look back upon: there were none to make him ashamed: he had never been in trouble through betting or other silly things that some men did.

It would have been pleasant to have retired as a Manager, for besides the dignity it would have added an annual £50 to his pension. But it mattered less now than it might have done. The worry of Managership took a physical and mental toll: he was fresher and stronger than Wilson would be when he retired, and the compensation was coming to him now. He had not missed a Managership through lack of brains: he had missed it because he had not been cut out for it—because he had really been cut out for something else . . .

Something else. He rose from his chair and went to the bookcase. Behind the glass doors stood the great twelve-volume *History of England* that his fat uncle Henry had given him, in the spirit of a balloon unloading ballast. He had never had time to do more than glance at them. He saw them now as the stout companions that would accompany him upon the first part of his journey.

He would study them: every volume, every page, carefully and thoughtfully: to build the solid background he would need. With a tingle in his fingers he opened the doors and drew out Volume I. It was half-past ten, and out of the stillness came the plaintive hooting of a fogbound train. The sound no longer filled him with oppressive thoughts of a chilled platform wait in the morning: he peered out at the hazy, bitten road and drew the curtains tighter.

The room was warm and the fire would last an hour. He drew a small table up to the armchair and got a pencil and some paper to jot down notes of his reading. It occurred to him with a slight pang that, having left the office, he would in future have to buy his own pencils, but that would be a trivial thing beside the compensated blessings.

#### Chapter I Prehistoric Britain

(The South Downs—wiry turf—wind blowing through his hair—vague humps of an earthen fortress—buried flint arrowheads waiting for the spade. The very title of the Chapter stirred the blood.)

"There were still no Straits of Dover when the earliest aborigines drifted in a westerly direction across Europe, into the tangle of marsh and forest that was to form the British Isles . . .

"His rude weapons, of flint and stone, have been found in river drift and in the caves that were his dwelling-places . . . the greater part of the North Sea was a marshy plain . . . the worst of the ice age had passed away . . .

He sat up with a start: the big book, falling to the ground, awakened him. Twenty past eleven—he had dozed for half an hour. It was silly to try and begin work like this: the stress of the day had tired him more than he had realised. Tomorrow night would be different—he would be fresh and alert and could work for hours.

He picked up the book, retrieved the pencil that had chattered down the left of the armchair, turned out the light and went up to bed.

Tired though he was, it took him some little while to settle down, for

cheap clocks, like crickets, chirp stronger as the night wears on. First he had to get up to cover his new present with a towel. A little later he had to get up again to put the clock, towel and all, into the wardrobe cupboard.

When Mr. Baldwin awoke to his first morning of retirement he discovered that he did not really need the extra half-hour in bed that he had planned. All that he needed was to hear the clock strike eight and to tell himself there was no necessity to get up. Having done that he had no further desire to stay in bed.

But breakfast for the future was to be at nine o'clock: to rise at the old time would have meant a half-hour wait for breakfast in the dining-room, and Ada, who had accepted the alteration with very bad grace, would have taken a gloating delight in keeping them waiting. So they remained in bed and told each other how nice it was.

Edith actually got up at twenty-five past eight, but Mr. Baldwin stuck it until the dining-room clock chimed the half-hour. He ignored the strangled ticking in the wardrobe cupboard and, going to the bathroom, began his toilet in as leisurely a way as possible in order to take advantage of the extra ten minutes he had allowed himself.

But here again was a difficulty. An extra minute spent with his shaving brush in working up an extra special lather resulted in the quickest shave he had ever had. Deliberation with studs and cuff-links brought further undesired expedition and he was well ahead of time when a problem arose to delay him. He was automatically pulling on his City trousers when he realised that he had given no consideration to the dress required for his rough mornings in the garden.

City trousers were obviously wrong, and he began to search the wardrobe for something appropriate: he examined a pair of grey flannel trousers that he watched football matches in, but decided they were too good at present; his plus-fours were out of the question, and after turning everything out decided upon a shiny pair of blue serge.

He completed his gardening costume with an old woollen cardigan and when he came whistling downstairs, care-free and comfortable, at ten past nine, he found that an unpleasant incident had happened.

**O**N the stroke of nine Ada had brought in the fried herrings. Edith could hear her husband rummaging about upstairs, but not wishing to hurry him on the first morning of his retirement, had told Ada to keep his herring hot for him until he came down. This simple request had startling consequences. Ada, already sizzling, blew up—

"How am I going to get cleared away and washed up and finished with the bedrooms before the tradesmen come! How can I answer the kitchen door when I'm still making the beds upstairs?"

Edith had simply replied that now Mr. Baldwin had retired they would need to adjust one or two things.

"Adjust things!" cried Ada—"turning 'em upside-down, that's what it is—everything upside-down! How am I going to make up the time I lose in cooking breakfast half an hour late—and then having it lying in the oven? I suppose there'll be a big lunch to cook now as well."

Ada had come out and slammed the door, and Mrs. Baldwin knew that this quivering bang was the first shot in

what might prove a long and difficult guerrilla war. Ada was a good servant, but like many good servants of mature years, she regarded the disturbance of settled habits as she would the desecration of an altar.

She was apparently lying in wait for Mr. Baldwin and almost trod on his heels as she followed him into the dining-room with his herring.

"It's dried up," snapped Ada, and banged the door again. Mr. Baldwin looked round in surprise.

"Fullo!—What's up with Ada?"

He laughed when Edith told him.

"She's right, you know! If we hadn't got Ada we'd be coming down to breakfast at ten o'clock! Nine o'clock sharp in future, and no messing about!"

But Edith knew that this simple resolution would only smooth out one small detail.

"And it's not dried up at all," he added. "It's fine."

A herring on a hurried working day meant the consumption of the roe and the obvious portions only. This morning Mr. Baldwin explored the intricate, bone-ridden sections below: he took the fish to pieces as a craftsman would a delicate watch. He was in buoyant spirits: there was enormous satisfaction in seeing harassed half-breakfasted men hurry by towards the station.

"Look!—there goes old Anderson!—he's only got five minutes: he's always late—comes dashing into the station as the gates close. He'll have a heart attack one of these days."

He reached for the marmalade and spread his toes in his slippers: he had half expected the call of a dying habit when he saw his old travelling companions go by, but he was thinking too eagerly of the garden, and the settling down to Chapter I of the *History* in the afternoon.

The fog had disappeared: it looked dull and rather cold outside, but a good morning for hard work.

"What do you think I ought to do first? The lawn—or the hedge out there?"

Edith suggested that he should begin by sweeping up the leaves, and he heartily agreed. Sweeping, he said, was an excellent exercise for the stomach muscles and would give him a ravenous appetite for lunch.

"I shan't be able to give the whole morning to the garden: it'll just have to be a quick look round today. There's a whole crowd of things to do."

He began ticking them off on his fingers—"I'll have to try and get up to Boots to open that library subscription: I've got to write to the Railway Company for the rebate on my season ticket—then I must get some gardening gloves—there's a whole lot of things—"

Edith said he might like to come up with her at half-past eleven, when she went shopping, but he waved this aside.

"It would mean we should both be hanging about wasting time, and after all, there's not a lot of daylight for the garden. I tell you what! Let's go up together after tea!"

That suited Edith better, too.

"What sort of lunch would you like?" she asked. "I suppose you'd like the same sort that you have in the City?"

"Good heavens, no!—I shall have exactly what you always have when you're alone."

Edith laughed. "I never have anything!"

"What!—You don't have anything?"

"Only a snack—sometimes a little salad, or bread and cheese. When I'm busy I just have a cake and some coffee at Lyons."



Mr. Baldwin was surprised and concerned.

"You ought to have more than that, Edie; you're looking thin, you know. Let's split the difference—just a chop or something, and cheese. I'll do you more good than salad."

"You always have coffee after lunch in town—I expect you'd like a cup..."

"Certainly not! It's easy in a restaurant. It's too much of a bother at home and I really don't want it. Order in a crate of beer."

He rose from the table and clapped his hands together; from the distance came the rattle of a train.

"I don't want you to alter anything, Edie." He stood behind her chair and squeezed her shoulders. "It's going to be fine, lunching together every day. I hated those stuffy dining-rooms in the city—that awful smell of food; other people sitting right on top of you."

Edith laughed. She got up and gathered together the breakfast things to save Ada's time. She rang the bell, and Ada came ostentatiously downstairs with a dust in her hand to show that she had been disturbed from doing the bedrooms.

Edith took the breakfast things into the passage and piled them on the table beside the kitchen stairs. She took the cloth on to the garden steps and shook the crumbs out for the birds. When she returned to the dining-room Mr. Baldwin was in the armchair by the fire, reading the picture paper.

They took two papers; one for the news, the other for the pictures. Mr. Baldwin took the newspaper with him to the train, and it was Edith's habit, after breakfast to sit for a little while in the window seat and glance through the picture paper before beginning her morning's work.

It was a very little thing; just a habit—but it was the first gentle step in the ladder of her day's work. Now suddenly this step had given way, and she was not lissom enough, on the spur of the moment, to leap this unexpected space.

She stood aimlessly by the table; she looked across at the window seat, and then at the picture paper in her husband's hands. His silver head just showed over the back of the chair, and the other paper, his paper, lay beside him. She felt as bad as Ada to allow such a small thing to disturb her.

Quietly closing the door, she went down to the kitchen and filled a jug of water for the ferns in the drawing-room. It was funny how Tom seemed to think that because he had retired, she had retired, too.

Mr. Baldwin looked up at the clock and threw down the paper. This would never do; ten o'clock and nothing done. By this time the whole staff had arrived in the office, the post was opened and everybody had begun work. He put on the old shoes he had selected for gardening, went through the drawing-room and opened the French windows.

It was an occasion, this first entrance to the garden; it was the entrance of a new Manager—a live wire—come to pull together and inject new life into a neglected old concern.

It occurred to him how dimly the old Mr. Baldwin had neglected it. From October to March he had scarcely seen it in daylight except at week-ends, and week-ends gave no time to do anything important. In the spring and summer a man used to come in once a week, and the man had just done enough to prevent Mr. Baldwin from taking an interest himself.

Edith had some rose trees and a

pair of gloves for gathering occasional blossoms, and that was the sum total of the garden activities of the past. From now on things would change. He reviewed his property from the balcony before descending the steps.

Everything was dark, and threadbare, and asleep. A sparrow hurriedly gathered up the last breadcrumb from the shaken tablecloth and disappeared.

Despite his neglect of it, the possession of this land gave Mr. Baldwin more solid satisfaction than the house itself. His ownership extended far beyond the surface and the things that grew upon it; it extended down and down, for thousands of miles, a vast wedge that tapered slowly away, until as a minute, pin-point it met everybody else's land at the centre of the earth.

He owned grass and gravel, clay and rock, possibly a section of a subterranean river and any amount of volcanic fire. He could dig it, blast it, tunnel it if he chose; do anything with it except keep pigs, forbidden by the Council; he could have a dense wood or a sunken garden with statues, a pond, or a sugar-loafed hill.

AS it was, Mr. Baldwin reflected now, he had a prematurely bald lawn surrounded by a gravel path; flower borders, some shrubs and a few fruit trees in the broad strip at the bottom, the whole surrounded by a stout wall of brown brick.

His thoughts flew to this land whenever his morning paper foretold the collapse of civilization. He reckoned at a pinch, that he could grow enough to keep Edith and himself alive. He had tested this during the war when he had set two rows of potatoes and produced a number of pallid little globules that tasted of soap.

Malnutrition had been the cause of this, for his pride in a great annual cluster of nasturtiums had been somewhat dampened when he read in his gardening book that nasturtiums flourished at their best in "any poor soil."

For some time past he had been studying a gardening book, and practically knew by heart "What To Do in October." But the doing of most of these things was dependent upon certain preparatory things that should have been done in the spring. Edith had struck the right note when she had suggested sweeping up the leaves.

"Leaves," said his book, "should be swept from lawns and paths, being heaped up in an off corner of the garden and left to decay."

The leaves that came from their own trees were negligible in quantity, but a weeping tree in a neighbor's garden overhung the Baldwin's land and presented them annually with a sodden, brandy-colored carpet.

Sometimes it threw them a few mildewed nuts in return for the nourishment its roots sapped up from Mr. Baldwin's garden, but usually it only gave away Mr. Baldwin went to the tool-shed to find a broom.

Piles of discarded newspapers, broken deck-chairs, empty paint tins and cardboard boxes creep into tool-sheds like rats into a granary. Mr. Baldwin could scarcely get in: the shed presented a morning's work in itself, but he set this aside for the first wet day.

The tools were very rusty and needed a great deal of greasing to bring them back to efficiency. This also could wait.

He pulled out the besom broom, shook the cobwebs off it, and examined it. It was hopelessly worn out—

nothing more than a toothpick—its few remaining strands had rested so long on the ground that they were turned stiffly up like an old-fashioned barber's quiff.

He decided to burn the broom later on and use its ashes to nourish the lawn. He threw it aside and began work with the rake. But most of the leaves got through the rakes, and after a fruitless ten minutes he decided to go and see if there was an old broom he could borrow from the house.

He would gladly have used his fingers—even his shaving brush—to sweep up the leaves had he foreseen the unhappy results of his endeavor to bring about a friendly alliance between the garden and the kitchen.

The whole enterprise seemed blighted from its beginning, for in the first place Mr. Baldwin, once in the garden, had the greatest difficulty in regaining an entrance to the house. He discovered that during his short absence the French windows had been closed and these, once closed, could only be opened from the inside.

It seemed a little absurd to go round and knock at his own front door, so he took the easier and more reasonable course of going down the basement steps to the kitchen entrance.

The baker's boy was blocking the kitchen door with his basket, and Mr. Baldwin had to stand by and wait while the boy signed the book and searched for some change.

This took an irritatingly long time, and Ada increased Mr. Baldwin's embarrassment by looking at him steadily over the boy's shoulder with a suspicious, hostile stare that made him feel like a pedlar waiting to be sent off with a flea in his ear.

But worse things were to follow. The boy having departed, Mr. Baldwin went into the doorway and said in a friendly, jocular voice: "I say, Ada—I wonder if you can let me have an old broom to get up some leaves? Any old thing'll do."

There was nothing demanding in his manner, and a polite refusal from Ada would have ended the matter without the slightest difficulty. But the reception of his harmless, polite request was astounding.

"A broom—to sweep up leaves?" Ada shouted—"Leaves!—when there ain't a decent broom in the house for the carpets! Here am I trying to get the bedrooms finished half an hour late—and tradesmen at the door every half-minute! No!—there ain't a broom—not for leaves there ain't!"

She stooped down, picked up a small cake of mud that Mr. Baldwin had brought in on his heel and flung it out of the door with a hiss of disgust.

Mr. Baldwin was speechless; he had seen Ada sulky; he had heard her grumble occasionally when her rigid routine was upset—but he had never seen her like this. Her nose was white with anger; two vivid little patches of color had risen to her cheek-bones, demented little strands of hair fluttered over her forehead. She stood back from the table like a wounded animal at bay.

Then suddenly his own anger came; he was angry at Ada for her senseless behaviour and angry at himself for blundering into a humiliating situation. He saw clearly now that he should have gone to the dining-room, spoken first to Edith and ordered the broom to be sent up to him.

But he could not draw back now. A stiff, long-handled broom was leaning in a corner by the kitchen range, beside the dust-pan. He crossed to it, picked it up and said in a light, easy voice—"This'll do. We'll get a new one for the house."

He felt better with the broom in his hand; he had spoken as if Ada



had never given vent to her outburst at all; he began to feel that he might still come out of it with dignity, but when he turned, Ada was facing him again; she was blocking his retreat. For a horrible moment he pictured himself struggling with his servant for a broom — dreadful newspaper headlines flashed before him — "Brondebury man charged with assaulting elderly servant."

Then Ada blazed more fiercely than before. "That's my broom! — put it down!" she shouted.

"It happens to be my broom," he said — and shame rushed over him. It was not his broom — every inch of it was Ada's — two dark patches on the handle worn by Ada's hands; the bristles worn diagonally across from the patient motion of her arms; it was steeped in her personality as his old favorite razor was steeped in his. What would he feel if Ada came to his bedroom and took his favorite razor to peel potatoes?

He would still have laid it down if Ada had given him a chance, but suddenly she stood away, flung the loaf of bread on the table and burst into a high-pitched, cackling laugh.

"All right! — Go on! Take it! I don't care if the house turns into a pig-sty! — It's nothing to do with me! I'm only a servant!" And she gave the dust-pan a kick that sent it by a fluke straight into the cupboard and back into its place.

He paused in the doorway with the broom under his arm.

"I ought to give you notice for this, Ada."

"I take my notice from the mistress."

There was a queer husky dignity in her voice that made him glance back in surprise. As he had turned to the steps leading up to the garden a pale shaft of sunlight had flashed in his eyes and when he looked back the kitchen was filled with brooding shadows. Ada was almost lost in them; she was standing quite still. It might have been a solitary, discarded wax-work of Mrs. Noah, set aside and forgotten in a twist store-room.

As Mr. Baldwin went up the steps towards the garden he noticed another tradesman's boy, standing with his mouth wide open, beside the coal-cellar door. He had probably witnessed the whole sordid affair and would pass it round Brondebury.

He no longer wanted the broom; it humiliated him to hold it, but he had to use it now. He ostentatiously flicked some leaves from the crevices of the flower border; its handle was smooth and warm from the heat of the kitchen and it seemed almost cruel to let the frail old thing grow cold.

After a little while he leant it against the wall and used the rake again. Ada's shrill voice was upstairs now, in one of the bedrooms, and through the open window he could hear Edith quietly and patiently making reply. The altercation was a long one, then finally a door slammed and there was silence.

It was pitiful to have this happen upon the first morning of his new life. He wanted peace, and dignity, and happiness, and Ada had destroyed them all. She had made him feel like a naughty little boy — then a senseless bully who had forced a broom from a defenceless old woman and threatened her with dismissal because she was in his power and too old to find another place.

The sun took Ada's part, and disappeared behind a misty cloud to show its contempt for him; the morning grew suddenly cold and dank; the leaves, too, stood up for Ada and clung to the path to show that even if they also were small and

defenceless, they were not going to give in to a bully.

He plodded on, but his heart was no longer in his work: he took up a little pile of defeated leaves and stacked them in a corner behind the apple trees. He was stooping over them, flattening them down, as a quiet step came behind him and he turned to find Edith standing by.

She was dressed to go out shopping, in a neat brown costume and white gloves, and he felt ashamed when he saw her troubled, unhappy face. She had borne the whole brunt of this silly incident and he knew that whatever she had felt, she had stoutly taken his part. He brushed his hair aside with a grimy hand and smiled.

"Hullo, dear — off to the shops?"

"Yes, I'll have to be getting along." She nodded towards the little pile of leaves. "That's going to be fine for the garden next spring. You'll have to let me have some for my rose trees."

"I think it'll buck things up," he said, and he saw Edith glance towards the broom. "Did I hear Ada shouting upstairs?"

Edith began buttoning her gloves.

"Tom, dear — I know Ada's silly but it is hard on her. You see, she's only got that one broom, and she keeps wanting it all the morning."

Mr. Baldwin gave a careless laugh. "Such a fuss about nothing — I haven't hurt the thing — look at it! Anybody'd think I was going to smash it to bits!"

"It's not that, Tom. Ada wants it, you see."

She looked at him with her shy, level grey eyes. It was like her to take his part with Ada, and Ada's part with him.

"Surely we can afford another!"

"Of course we can — if I'd known you wanted one, dear."

He leant on his rake and took one of Edith's gloved hands. "I'm sorry, Edie. I don't want the broom! If only Ada had explained like a reasonable human being. She was abominably rude. We can't allow it: if it happens again she must go."

Edith gave a little laugh.

"We'd never get another like her. You know that, Tom. They simply won't come nowadays, where there's a basement. We must try and be patient with her, and leave her alone. She is a good worker."

**M**R. BALDWIN knew that perfectly well. No servant had stayed with them as long as Ada. Even her crotchiness was a disguised quality, for it rarely occurred except when her routine was threatened. But no power on earth would persuade him to creep back to the kitchen with the broom. He nodded carelessly towards it and began raking the path.

"I've finished with it now, if she wants it." He paused and went on with a return of his old enthusiasm. "You know, Edie, that gardener fellow used to burn all the leaves and grass cuttings. Just shows what gardeners are: don't care a rap when it's not their own garden. We'll stack everything here and dig it all in along the borders next spring."

"You've made a wonderful difference already," said Edith. "Don't overdo it to start with or you'll be stiff tomorrow. I'll be back just before one."

"You might leave those French windows open when you go in, Edie."

As she went down the basement steps with the broom, she saw him leaning on his rake gazing over the lower wall towards the houses in Alma Road.

Soon after twelve o'clock Mr. Baldwin decided to act upon his wife's suggestion and shorten his first morn-

ing's gardening to avoid excessive stiffness next day. He pulled a few obstinate leaves out of the prongs of his rake, added them to the neat pile he had made against the wall and looked at the cleared space under the walnut tree with satisfaction.

The leaves, when stacked, had yielded so obediently to the pressure of his foot that he was confident they would begin decaying without delay.

He carefully scraped his shoes and went up the iron steps into the drawing-room. He could hear Ada moving about in the kitchen, so he went upstairs with confidence, washed his hands, and came down to rest by the dining-room fire.

To sit by the fire at twelve o'clock on a week-day morning was so definitely associated with a billious attack or a cold that he had to assure himself more than once that he was in normal health. It was very pleasant to feel the soft breath of leisure round his shoulders, but he was not entirely at his ease.

On the previous night he had closed the door on the past and set his face to the future, but this morning he was beginning to discover that the door was warping badly, and things he had meant to shut away were drifting through the cracks.

When he had gone to the toolshed for the rake the sudden twilight had twisted the shed into the shape of the dim-lit office safe from which at that hour of the morning it was his custom to collect the money deposited on the previous night. For a moment his hands had passed the rake and groped automatically for more familiar things—a canvas bag of coin—a bundle of notes in an elastic band—a wad of postal orders and a pile of multi-colored cheques.

Now, as the clock chimed half-past twelve he glanced over his shoulder, half expecting to see Mason and Palmer pass him on their way to lunch. He was disturbed and rose abruptly from his chair: it was no part of his plan to let this happen. He had intended to work in the garden until the moment lunch was ready; his programme was upset, and he was unprepared for a sudden, empty space of time.

He picked up the morning paper and crossed to the window seat: he had a sudden aversion from settling himself slackly by the fire. Having read most of the news after breakfast he turned to the gardening notes: "Dahlia tubers must now be lifted and stored."

He flicked the paper impatiently to the financial column—advice of that kind irritated a man who had no dahlia tubers.

The ordinary papers never quoted his shares in the Bank of Paraceta. News that Gilt-edged were soaring left him cold. He laid the paper down and glanced round the room. He had no desire to begin his reading and he could settle down, according to plan, in the afternoon.

He decided to begin turning out one of the drawers in his bureau. It was a job he had set aside for a wet day and he began with an uncomfortable feeling that he was breaking into his emergency ration.

The drawer was chock full of papers: old envelopes, unfamiliar looking stamps—an ancient Book of Rules of the Acacia Tennis Club, long defunct—a complete set of receipted Gas bills, 1905-1924....

Ada came in to lay lunch. His back was towards her and he did not look round, but he could tell by her quietness that her evil mood had passed; he could feel that her eyes were upon the swollen waste-paper basket, but she closed the door so quietly that he scarcely heard it.



From his seat at the bureau he had a clear view down the road and he found himself growing amused and interested in things that he had never had the opportunity of observing before. Towards one o'clock the road had come to life; and he could watch the eddying of life in a backwater unseen by the City men who passed each day by the main stream.

One or two tradesmen's boys cycled up to houses and took parcels in with a hurry suggesting belated orders for lunch. Then came a thin, erratic stream of school children: quick, tapping heels; two small girls bounding a ball.

A woman came to a gate, bundled one of them in and shoved the other off to a nearby house—two boys in green caps came by and lingered at another gate while they looked at some foreign stamps. Then one went in and the other went on.

Hard on the heels of the returning school children came the mothers with parcels and shopping baskets, and Mr. Baldwin suddenly realised that he was watching something to which his own wife belonged. He began to look out for her, and grew impatient to see so many other women return ahead of her.

At last she came—he waved to her from the window; she looked surprised, as though, lost in thought, she had momentarily forgotten that he was at home; then she smiled, waved back and hurried in, frowning and shaking her head in comic despair at the squeaking gate.

To sit lunching in his own home, with Edith opposite him and the fire gently fluttering behind, was a great improvement upon the noisy Coffee Room at the Unicorn with its smoky ceiling and perpetual smell of soup and beer. A drizzling rain had come on; it darkened the room, threw up the glow of the fire and set the stage invitingly for his first afternoon's work upon his history books.

He was in no great hurry to begin; he was content for the moment to anticipate the pleasure of settling down to his new studies. He wanted to sit back in his chair, smoke a cigarette and enjoy a placid, rambling talk with Edith for half an hour. But Edith was not good at conversation after lunch; it was her habit to rise directly her meal was over, so that Ada could clear the table and leave her undisturbed for her afternoon nap by the fire.

Mr. Baldwin began discussing improvements to the garden, but Edith was restless. She tried to respond but her remarks were dull and pointless, and after a while she rose and began collecting the plates and glasses together. He looked up in surprise and disappointment, then rose himself and went to the windows.

"Lucky I got those leaves stacked before the rain set in," he said. "I'll soak into them and help them rot."

Edith heartily agreed, and helped Ada to clear the lunch away. When she returned to the dining-room she found that Tom had settled down in her favorite armchair by the fire with a thick, musty-looking volume from the bookcase resting on his chest.

There were two armchairs in the dining-room. One faced the light from the window and was narrow, hard and shiny; the other had its back to the window and was broad, well-worn and comfortable. For many years, on week-days when Tom was at the office, it had been Mrs. Baldwin's habit to draw the curtains, settle down in the broad, comfortable chair with her eyes from the window and doze for half-an-hour in the twilight by the fire.

She looked forward to it, not only for the relaxation, but because it com-

pletely refreshed her for the rest of the day; it had become both a luxury and a vital need; the pleasantest of all combinations.

Now Tom was in her chair, and for the second time within a few hours she found herself the slave to a habit that showed its teeth when it was disturbed. It demanded to know what her husband would have done if he had returned one day from lunch in the City to find her calmly sitting at his desk; it angrily pointed to a selfish, sprawling man depriving her of her one hard-earned indulgence.

He had worked for forty years to earn the pleasure of sitting by his fire on a week-day afternoon; he had gone to work in the dawn of winter days; through snow, and blinding rain—he had sat for hours in bitter, fog-bound trains—for six months at a stretch he had scarcely seen his home by the light of day. He had earned his retirement a hundred times and now she was resenting his first day's rest because it upset her forty winks in her favorite chair.

She got her needlework and tried to settle down in the narrow, slippery chair opposite him.

"That's a nice fat book you've got there," she said.

"Ah'm," murmured Mr. Baldwin—and she accepted the signal for silence.

She knew quite well that if she explained things to him he would immediately jump up and give her the chair—but what could he do? The chair she was sitting in was too far from the window to give sufficient light to read on a dull day, and unless she drew the curtains the pleasure of her siesta was destroyed.

He might take his book into the drawing-room, but she could not think of him sitting in that cheerless place without a fire in order that she could sleep comfortably in the warmth.

Normally she sat up to the table with her needlework when Tom came home in the evenings; this hard, slippery chair was good enough for sitting in after dinner; but for relaxing in-dooring in, it was impossible. The seat was so high that she could see straight out into the wet, dreary road.

A LAUNDRY van drew up at the house opposite: two children in mackintoshes trotted past on their way to afternoon school—a nondescript man was going in and out of the gates along the opposite side distributing pamphlets—afternoon things that Mrs. Baldwin would not have seen in the ordinary way, with the curtains drawn and her face away from the windows.

She hitched herself up on the slippery leather seat and tried to concentrate upon her needlework. Despite her discomfort habit brought on drowsiness, but the light from the tall, gaunt windows dug through her eyelids, and when her head nodded she slipped down the seat. The chair was like a balking chute.

Tom was breathing heavily through his nose. She began to think he had fallen asleep, until he turned a page so unexpectedly that it made her jump. His deep breathing came from concentration. She began to wonder why he was reading an old thing that had stood neglected in the bookcase for years and years.

From her unaccustomed seat the light from the window revealed the room in a disconcerting way. It showed her how faded the covering to the mantelpiece had become; it disclosed thin, meandering cracks in the wallpaper.

The room had never pleased her; it had always been too crowded with furniture, and the windows were too

big to take the kind of curtains she would like to hang. She had often made plans to improve things but even with her husband's full salary there had never been quite sufficient; from now on there would be less.

Tom was really doing now: the big book lay on his chest. She liked him better in his smart City clothes than in the shiny blue trousers and old brown cardigan he had put on for gardening; he had taken pride in his clothes and she hoped that his retirement would not lead him into slovenly habits. It was hard to believe that his working days were over; he would pass for fifty anywhere, with his slight figure and thick silver hair.

She rose from the hopeless chair, tiptoed out of the room and went up to the spare bedroom to try the curtains she was working on. They were not ready to try yet but she felt that she must move about—do something, do anything to ward off the panic that began to grip her.

She held the curtains to the windows but scarcely noticed how they were progressing. She lowered them, and stood looking down the deserted road. The cool air of the bedroom seemed to clear her mind; it gave her the chance she needed, to collect her thoughts and put them in some kind of order.

For months she had known that her husband's retirement was coming and yet her preparations had only been for him: how would he respond to it?—What would he do? She had thought of him individually all the time and for some inconceivable reason had never considered it as a dual problem that would profoundly affect them both.

She had thought her own life would go on exactly the same; that all her long-set plans and habits would remain serenely undisturbed; she had looked forward to devoting herself to the happiness of her husband in his retirement, and now, before a single day had passed, some trivial incidents had come to throw a cruel, revealing light upon the fragile ground that had supported their past happiness.

Happily as they had always lived together, she knew today more clearly than ever before that this happiness depended upon a regular, daily period of absence from each other. Given this, their companionship was perfect, and it was the realisation that this vital bulwark was destroyed that brought Edith to the verge of panic. She knew that they had no mutual well from which to draw their mutual interests. Their evenings were made pleasant by an exchange of anecdotes: of incidents that had occurred in the other's absence. His were of things that had happened in the City—rumors he had heard—ideas he had got from talking with men in the train. Hers were of conversations with people she had met during shopping—of new shops discovered—a dozen things that had happened during his absence from the house.

Their supply of conversation, like a battery that quickly exhausted itself, needed a long period of daily rest for recharging. There would be a desperate squandering of the battery in the long, winter nights ahead.

She saw now how futile had been her vision of a cheerful, resourceful woman, encouraging her husband to face the demoralising fears of retirement. She had foreseen Tom's battle, but she had not foreseen her own; and while his battles were clear to understand and easier to grapple with, hers were obscure—the more difficult because she must fight on lonely fields in secret.

If he chose to discuss his difficulties she might still be able to help



him, but she could never discuss here: the very mention of them would come as a blow in his face.

How could she say that his constant presence in the house was making her life unhappy? That his only way of helping her would be to go out, and stay out, for eight hours a day?

The happiness of their married life; their contentment in each other's company, had been the breeding-ground of the difficulties they were now to face, for the result had been that they had never sought for mutual friends. She had her own friends at the Bridge Club and another circle at the Welfare Centre where she spent one afternoon a week; his friends had mostly been colleagues of his office and companions of the train—as remote from her as her friends were from him.

Now his were out away from him, and he had apparently made no plans to seek others; already, for nearly 24 hours, he had spoken to no one but Ada and herself. The Ada conversation had not been inspiring and she herself had run dry after lunch and had come up to a cold spare bedroom to seek things to talk about at tea.

Week-ends came to mind, when the weather had kept them indoors, inactive and together for hours at a stretch; she remembered how perilously close they had come to a dead end; moments when both felt themselves groping for something else within each other's mind—never finding it—and wondering whether anything else was there to find.

She knew that he was interested in other things and she had tried to respond, but there was an impatience in his nature that prevented him from lingering behind with her to explain elementary points. Sometimes, on holiday, he would surprise her by stopping dead before some old building or ruined castle; he would stand in rapt silence for minutes on end, then say, "Isn't that magnificent!"

She had always agreed, but had never discovered magnificence in decay. Mustiness, beetles and long-dead bones never stimulated her as would a field of corn or a road-side of spring flowers.

When he said, "Can't you picture knights in armor riding over that moat?" she had to detach her mind from a heap of rusty tins in a weed-grown ditch. She admitted him for his visions but was faithful to her own.

She resolved to try harder to join him in his interests; she determined to work tactfully at finding friends who would mutually satisfy them. For the time being she could think of nothing else. Gone for ever were those retreating evenings together in the evenings—that cheerful "What have you been doing today?"

The clock downstairs struck three: another hour before tea would be ready. It was extraordinary how the afternoons had always slipped by in the past without thought of time. She held up the curtains again and saw that in their present state they were at least an inch too long.

Mr. Baldwin did not hear the clock strike three; the mist and drizzle were things of the past; a blue, unruffled sea stretched before him and the cliffs of Dover trembled in an August haze. He was at Caesar's elbow in the prow of a galley and behind them lay 80 squat transports with 8000 silent, armored men.

They had left Boulogne with the midnight tide and now, against the skyline, they could see a horde of painted Britons following their along the cliffs. They could hear their distant shouting as they clambered up and down the gulleys—their chiefs in

chariots—some ardent warriors stumbling along the bouldered shore. Caesar had decided to wait until the tide turned, and then run eastwards to where his scouts had told him there were no rifts to scale. The wind and tide, remarked Caesar, would bear them faster than their enemies could follow over the rough downs. They would probably land in the evening unopposed.

Mr. Baldwin laid the book down and sat gazing into the fire: on a day like this he had seen those unaltered downs—and sea—and sky. He could picture every detail of that great adventure of 2000 years ago—the Gallic cavalry ripping their frightened horses in the flat-bottomed transports—the Britons sweating across the stiff, chalky turf—the blue sky and the blue sea—England's history beginning at two o'clock on an August afternoon.

WITHOUT any doubt, Mr. Baldwin reflected, his ability to visualise these things so clearly was proof that his instinct had guided him to his true vocation. He was glad that he had not been an Historian all his life, for that would have robbed him of the pleasures before him now. Page 35 he slipped a pipe-cleaner in to mark the place. Before he went to bed he would have left Caesar and the Druids behind; tomorrow he would probably lend the first William a hand in compiling his Domesday Book.

No one, the book remarked, had ever discovered what language those ancient Britons spoke, or whether they had any form of writing. What a chance for somebody! Supposing, in his explorations, he were to discover a stone, covered in hieroglyphics—a key to the first tongue spoken in Britain? His name would then join history itself.

He decided that he would make his first Field Excursion very soon: Edith and he would make a day's pilgrimage to the site of one of the earliest monuments—Stonehenge, or Avebury, or if it rained, the British Museum.

"Tea ready, Ada?"—Why, goodness! it's four o'clock!"

"I expect you've been having a nap, sir." Ada was her old self again; the broom in hand, was apparently forgotten and forgiven, and he was very thankful.

"Nap!—I should think not!—I've had a quiet couple of hours with a fine book. All about Ancient Britain, Ada."

"Ah—those were the days, sir." She put a plate of toast in the fire-place and went out as Edith came in.

"What have you been up to, Edie?" "Just fixing curtains to that spare room."

"You're always busy on something. You never seem to rest."

He got up briskly and came to the table.

"Now that we'll always be having tea together we ought to get a little table and have it by the fire."

She was glad to find him in such buoyant spirits. They decided to make an evening journey to the shops. There was his subscription to open at Book's Library—a letter to post to the Railway Company, applying for a rebate on his season ticket, and a pair of gardening gloves to buy.

"There's more to do now than when I was at the office," he said.

The domestic disturbances arising from Mr. Baldwin's retirement began to settle down in the course of a week or two and things seemed to adjust themselves to a new routine.

Ada discovered that the later rising and later breakfast of Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin gave her, too, an extra half-hour in bed, and at sixty-seven that

was no small comfort on a frosty morning.

There was now a more elaborate meal to prepare for lunch; a very dirty pair of gardening shoes to clean each morning and a certain amount of additional clearing up to do after Mr. Baldwin. Beyond that, things were very much the same as they used to be.

For the master was a considerate man on the whole, and never intentionally gave additional work. He occasionally asked her for a jam jar, or some other small thing for the garden, but he always applied through the proper channel; asking Mrs. Baldwin in the dining-room and allowing the request to be conveyed through her.

He never came into the kitchen again, and by means of a slight adjustment to the latch of the drawing-room window he was able to go out and come in from the garden without leaving the window open and allowing the house to get cold.

He was always out in the garden soon after breakfast; he dug all the borders and raked the lawn until it looked as if somebody had played football on it; he bought a pair of clippers and pruned the shrubs until they looked almost indecently naked; he did this, she suspected, to provide material for bonfires of which he never tired; he said the ashes contained potash salts invaluable to all shrubs and trees, but the scheme appeared to lose its purpose when you had to burn the trees and shrubs to secure the ash to fertilise them.

When he had burnt everything he could find in the garden, he cleared out the tool-shed and burnt most of its contents, including the handle of his rake that fell into the fire one day while he was having lunch. He asked her, through Mrs. Baldwin, to let him have all inflammable rubbish from the house—such as cardboard boxes, straw packing and newspapers.

When those supplies failed he went up and routed about in the boxroom and burnt some discarded curtain poles and an old Venetian blind. He told her that hard-wood ashes were particularly rich in potash salts and Ada had to keep a wary eye on her washing-stand.

When rain prevented bonfires he would bring old furniture down from the boxroom and paint it in the tool-shed. He suspected mice in the shed, and bought a trap and a quarter of cheese.

One day he caught one, and the house was upset for a whole morning while it was decided how they should do away with it. They had no cat, so Mr. Baldwin had a bucket of water brought out to drown it in. He stood for a long time over the bucket and pointed out to Mrs. Baldwin what pretty little things mice were, when you really looked at them—what bright eyes they had and what beautiful little coats they possessed.

When Mrs. Baldwin remembered that mice could swim he seemed relieved; he began to suggest tying a stone to the trap and submerging it, trap and all—but as he elaborated on the scheme he suddenly felt like Boris and stopped. It was a problem. One could not hang a mouse, or cut its throat; to bury it alive would merely assist its natural instinct.

Eventually he put the mouse, trap and all into a fruit bag and, smuggling it up to the Park, waited until no keepers were in sight and let it out into a shrubbery. He came home looking very pleased.

But after a week or two Ada began to feel that things were not going quite as they should. Mr. Baldwin took to coming in from the garden for a rest at eleven o'clock and would



often finish up at twelve. This she could understand, for the garden on a cold damp morning was not the place for a man past middle age. But his doings in the afternoons puzzled her.

For the first few days he settled down by the fire directly after lunch and read a book till tea-time; but after the first week or so he no longer remained concentrated for the whole afternoon, and she would often hear him roaming about, poking the fire, opening the window a little, or closing it. She would hear the sharp snick of the curtain rings as he jerked the curtains back: she would hear him in the hall—drawing his stick out of the metal stand; he would go for a walk and return so soon that he could scarcely have gone beyond the end of the road. She would hear his stick plunk back into the stand and his chair draw up to the fire again.

Sometimes, when she came in to lay tea, she would catch him standing at the windows, chinking some coins in his pockets, staring down the road. When he saw her he would turn round almost guiltily, pick up his book and start to read again.

One day he talked about turning the spare bedroom into a study and they tried to get an old table from the boxroom through the door. But it would not go, and after a half-hearted struggle he gave it up. He said it didn't matter, and in any case it would mean an extra fire, coals to bring upstairs and more cleaning up. So they took the table back and forgot about it.

He would often clear out drawers after tea and put a pile of old stuff aside to throw away. Then he would change his mind and put it all back, which was all to the good because he could clear it out again later on. One day he bought a scrapbook and began sticking in old photographs, bits cut from newspapers and all manner of things that were never made to be stuck anywhere. This made the dining-room table sticky and she had to mention it to Mrs. Baldwin.

It was worse one day when he went out and bought some sticks of glue. He melted them in an old enamel cup over the dining-room fire and mended the leg of a chair.

But the glue boiled over, and they had to open all the windows and let a cold east wind blow through the house to get rid of the smell.

Ada was puzzled, and worried. She understood that retired men played golf, but Mr. Baldwin did nothing but potter in the garden and read his book — and these things grew patchier and mow-straiter as the days passed by. He neither had friends nor sought them, and this too seemed queer to Ada.

But if Mr. Baldwin puzzled her, she understood and pitied her mistress with all her heart. Few things passed Ada's notice and it had been a genuine shock to her, on the first afternoon of the master's retirement to see him sitting in Mrs. Baldwin's chair, and Mrs. Baldwin perched unhappily in the hard one opposite him.

She noted the patient quietness with which her mistress faced the breaking up of her old habits and ways of life; Mrs. Baldwin treated her husband with the tender indulgence of an invalid, and it was a new shock to Ada when, on the night of the glue incident, she heard voices raised in anger, speaking one over each other — almost shouting — she heard him say: "How can I melt a tin of glue in the tool-shed without a fire? — don't you want the furniture mended?" And Mrs. Baldwin had cried out: "Oh, don't nag! leave me alone!"

It was a new thing for them to quarrel violently like this, but it hap-

pened again in the same week. Mrs. Baldwin had given up trying to have her rest in the dining-room, and had taken to going up to her bedroom, cold though it was, and resting in the chair with a quilt over her knees. One very cold afternoon she had asked Ada to light the fire up there, and she had sat by it between tea and dinner alone.

After dinner, from the top of the basement stairs, Ada heard raised, angered voices again — and the closed doors muffled them into sounds that were almost like cries of pain.

"You seem to think," shouted Mr. Baldwin, "that we've got as much money as we had before I retired! What's the matter with the dining-room? Isn't there room for the two of us in here?"

Mrs. Baldwin did not have a fire in the bedroom next day, but although it was very cold, she went up a long time before dinner and sorted out the things in her wardrobe.

Then came the morning when Mrs. Baldwin came into the kitchen and asked Ada if they could have a little talk.

Ada, disturbed but flattered, pulled up a chair for her mistress and the two sat opposite one another at the kitchen table — a thing that had never happened before.

It may have been the peculiar light in the basement, but Ada suddenly thought how much older her mistress looked. There were deep shadows under her eyes and she looked pale and tired.

"I'm a bit worried over expenses, Ada, and I'm wondering if there's any way we can cut things down." She looked frankly into Ada's face as she spoke as if she were venting something she had long repressed.

"You see, Mr. Baldwin's income has been reduced by nearly three pounds a week, and now that he has lunch at home it naturally adds about ten shillings to the housekeeping."

"But surely," exclaimed Ada, "the master saves a lot more than ten shillings by not going to London every day!"

Mrs. Baldwin glanced away, and did not meet Ada's eyes when she replied.

"I know — but Mr. Baldwin wants to put a little hedge in the front garden to be able to carry on the same — and we must try, Ada."

"You never had scarcely any lunch at all, ma'am — and the master wants meat, and pudding, and cheese."

"I know. But we must try and give him a good lunch after his gardening."

ADA'S father had been a proper gardener: he had worked from eight o'clock till one — and lunched on bread and cheese but she did not mind this. They had a long talk and decided there was no definite thing they could do without. They would be a bit more careful all round: Ada said she would wash everything except the sheets and table-cloths and they would save a good part of the laundry bill.

Mrs. Baldwin rose with a grateful smile.

"I don't know what I'd do without you, Ada."

And as the door closed, Ada's bosom swelled with pride. A few weeks ago she had felt sorry for herself. She had believed herself to be the solitary, unappreciated victim of Mr. Baldwin's retirement, left to suffer alone. Now she realised that she was the mainstay of the house: that she was sorry for them, mostly for the mistress — but a little more than previously for the master since she had had this talk.

She had never realised how much money went in rates and taxes, in insurance and other things until her mistress had so frankly told her: to drop three pounds a week was a lot when these big expenses went on the same, and she understood now why Mr. Baldwin did not play golf or have parties in to dinner.

But she still thought they ought to find some people and ask them to tea. They used to have lots of friends, but these had gradually left the neighborhood and they had never troubled to replace them. They had been sufficient to each other while they only had a few hours together each day — but now? . . . It was a great pity.

They had taken to going to the pictures in the afternoons instead of the evenings as they used to, but that meant every evening of the week was spent at home. The mistress had her Tuesday afternoons at the Bridge Club and Fridays at the Welfare Centre, but the master seemed to resent her doing even that and always said, "You're late," when she came in. As for him, he never seemed to meet anybody at all. They ought to take retired men in hand and teach them to do things, like they did blind people.

But Ada was going to play her part. She would do all she could. She found an error of sixpence in the baker's book — sixpence, naturally, on the wrong side. She put the book grimly aside to await the baker's arrival. She would give him something to think about for quite a long time.

October darkened into winter; leaden mornings — shrouded afternoons that stole away into the darkness with fog-signals as their minute guns — a high wind one night that unravelled Mr. Baldwin's leaf heap and rattlestaked it against the kitchen door.

Mr. Baldwin never missed his morning in the garden, but as the novelty wore off and his concentration lessened, he would often fall to brooding over things that were continually happening to irritate and worry him nowadays.

When he had gone out one morning to prune the laurel hedge in the front garden a man had come along and tried to sell him a roll of linoleum. The man had stood at Mr. Baldwin's elbow as he worked outside his gate, and begged and pestered until Mr. Baldwin had been forced to return to his back garden.

For days afterwards, as he dug the shrubbery, he found himself repeating under his breath the cutting things he should have said to the shameless beggar: he would work himself up into a sudden anger that would smoulder on until it was time for lunch. He would forget about it then, but it would come back next morning and he would work himself up all over again.

And frequently, as he worked, or read by the fire, or went for his walk in the Park, he would worry about Edith. She was so different these days. Whenever he settled down opposite her for a good long talk she would begin to fidget and look round the room like a caged animal; she would make pointless, absent-minded replies and finally make a feeble excuse to get away and sit alone in her bedroom.

On the other hand, when he wanted to settle down to read quietly, she would suddenly try and start a conversation, and would look unreasonably upset when he gently reminded her that he wanted quiet.

She had discovered that he was reading history, and would frequently



disturb him with some absurd remark about castles or something—or ask an idiotic question.

At first he had been patient, and replied as clearly and briefly as possible: later on it angered him because her interruptions sounded like attempts to humiliate an invalid or encourage a dilatory child. She had changed in an extraordinary way.

But more serious was her hopeless inability to adjust herself to their lower income. While he economised in the smallest detail she persisted in going to an absurdly expensive hairdresser in Malda Vale to have her hair waved. He liked her to look smart, but to have her hair done once a fortnight, at her age, was not playing the game in their present circumstances.

She bought new things for the house that they could no longer afford. When he protested against the expensive stuff she had bought for the dining-room mantelpiece she had asked whether he wanted the house to fall into rack and ruin! It infuriated him to see her posing as the heroic protector of the house, making him feel a fool who was attempting to destroy it.

Sometimes when he was pondering on these unpleasant things during his walk, he would suddenly pull himself up and try to remember if he had actually been round the Park ten minutes previously: he had been thinking so deeply that everything surrounding him had sunk away. He began to fear that his memory was failing, and never left home without a card in his pocket containing his name and address.

But there were times when he was sorry for Edith, and ashamed at himself for losing his temper with her. But what annoyed him most of all was her constant suggestion that he was lonely, and ought to find more friends.

It was such an easy suggestion to make: anyone would have thought he could walk out into the street and pick up friends like cigarette ends. Once upon a time there had been plenty of nice people in the neighborhood, but they had gradually drifted away, and those who had come to take their places were not up to the standard he desired.

To tolerate commonplace bores for the sake of talking was a nauseating business and he was happy enough in solitude if Edith would only stop worrying him about it.

This came to a climax one afternoon when Edith took the matter into her own hands and brought two women from the Welfare Club back to tea. He was amazed and humiliated when she broiled into the dining-room without a word of warning. He was reading by the fire in his gardening clothes—in an old woollen jersey. He had kicked his shoes off and there was a hole in the toe of one sock.

Despite this, despite the ruination of his afternoon's work, he had done his best for Edith's sake to join in the inane tea-table chatter. But he swallowed his cup of tea as quickly as possible and asked to be excused. He had taken his book and gone to sit in the cold drawing-room. When he heard the front door close on the two women and returned to the dining-room he was astonished to find Edith in tears.

"How could you be so rude, Tom? It made me feel so terrible."

"Rude? What on earth are you talking about?"

"Walking out of the room like that. I didn't know how to face them. Mrs Wheeler's wife of a Bank Manager."

"What's that got to do with it?"

"The way you treated them. — I only brought them back because I thought you'd like to."

He lost his temper.  
"What about me? . . . What do you think I felt . . . when you come crashing in with a couple of insane women without even . . ."

He had never finished. She had risen, escaped from the room and hastened upstairs. As she went out she had turned her face from him as though she were ashamed.

He sat by the fire, dejected and miserable. He understood why she had invited the women back: he pictured her planning it—selecting the women whom she thought he would most like to meet. He groped for his book and tried to read. What right had Edith to think him lonely? His mind was stored beyond the famines of loneliness.

**B**UT the incident had its effect. A few evenings later, while they were at dinner, Mr. Baldwin suddenly said: "Do you remember the Tarrants, who lived next door?"

"Yes, of course," said Edith.  
"They weren't bad people at all. They're living in Wembley now. I think we might ask them to dinner one evening and have a game of bridge."

In due course the Tarrants came. It was a big occasion to have people to dinner. Edith began planning the dinner days ahead: if a couple of soles in the North Sea felt their ears burning a night before they were caught was because of a long discussion between Ada and Edith as to the manner of their cooking.

Mr. Baldwin went down to Kensington to buy some new cards and scoring tablets; Edith bought flowers and a bottle of claret.

Their guests arrived in a small but noisy car and the quietness of "Grasmere" was soon broken by Mr. Tarrant's boisterous voice. He had got on well of recent years; a bit better, in fact, than Mr. Baldwin had bargained for. He was rather inclined to talk of the "old days" and poke fun at Brondebury Terrace as though the Baldwins, too, were no longer living there.

But it was a cheerful evening: Ada rose to the occasion with a delicious dinner and Mr. Tarrant had two helpings of everything. The Baldwins, however, lost five shillings and sixpence between them at bridge and Mr. Tarrant drank nearly half a bottle of whisky.

When the buzz of the little car died away and the door slammed and quietness reigned again, the Baldwins returned to the dining-room and opened the windows to let out the smoke. There were a few crumbs on the carpet; on the table were scattered cards and scoring tablets, and ashtrays heaped with cigarette ends, an empty syphon and a shallow whisky bottle.

Mr. Baldwin's throat ached with so much unusual talking, and after Edith had gone to bed he reckoned the evening had cost nearly two pounds: over half of their week's housekeeping money gone up in smoke in three hours. They could not entertain sufficiently often to make it worth while.

He was too tired to read: he followed Edith to bed before his usual time but something was disturbing him and he could not sleep. It was something unconnected with the Tarrants' visit, something that kept whispering about a veil of make-believe that grew thinner every day — and that he was powerless to do anything to repair its worn-out fabric.

It was on a morning in mid-December that the veil gave way and fell

aside. It happened suddenly: he had been digging for half-an-hour with scarcely a glance above the shoulder of his spade: telling himself that every spadeful turned would bring its reward in the spring.

Then he had straightened himself; the sudden change of position dazed him for a moment — his head cleared, and for the first time he saw the garden for what it really was. He faced the reality that for weeks he had struggled to drive away.

It was no good. This sour, worn-out soil was beyond human aid and chemical manure; he might as well give manure and tonic to a starving man. He had tried to believe that it was merely neglect that prevented flowers from blossoming in past years — that gave a scraggy dismalness to the shrubbery and a barrenness to his fruit trees.

But it was more than that. It was the suffocation of these gaunt, brown brick walls. He looked with revulsion at the discolored patches of brickwork where years ago some kind of sheds must have stood behind the shrubbery. Every ounce of nourishment had been sucked out of this dark, crusty soil. It was not a garden — it was a life prison for a few pallid things that had been taken from fertile homes to linger in a seasonless, walled-in obscurity. The garden was old and tired, and wanted to be left alone.

He put his spade in the tool-shed, and went into the house to rest by the fire. The corner stone had fallen and he knew that it was only a matter of time for the rest of his splendid plans to crumble away. He had expected everything around him to remain fresh and young out of respect for his pretence at remaining young himself. The dining-room was old and dull because the young man and girl who had furnished it were old themselves.

After a while he was surprised to feel an urge to return: he wanted to go on working in the garden and he went out of the French windows of the drawing-room and down the iron steps with a new desire: no longer the hasty champion who had come to rescue it, but a fellow prisoner to keep it company in its patient bondage.

It was Edith's habit to retire early and leave her husband to read alone for an hour before following her to bed. It happened one night that she had left her library book in the dining-room, but desiring not to disturb him had tried to make do with a magazine. But towards eleven, still feeling wide awake, she slipped on her dressing-gown and went softly downstairs to get her book.

He did not hear her come into the dining-room, and the sight of him made her cry out in dismay. He was not reading: he was sitting huddled in his chair, his book sprawled on the floor beside him, his face buried in his hands.

Her first thought was of sudden illness, but when he turned towards her she could see far more than physical pain — there was a misery that she had never seen in his face before — a despairing appeal that broke all the barriers that weeks of petty scolding had built between them.

Her library book was forgotten: she went over to him and put her hand on his bent shoulder.

"What is it, dear? — has anything happened?"

He poked the fire and coaxed up a little tongue of flame. He made her sit down, and he told her everything. Of the garden she knew, for she had watched, day after day, his work grow more listless and mechanical, but of the home locked in his dusty history books she did not know until



this moment: she had never guessed the fantastic heights to which they had beckoned him and how terribly they had failed him when he had held out his hands to them for help.

"But I can help you, dear! You know I'm interested in everything you do."

He shook his head.

"You know you can't, Edie. No more than I could help you make a curtain or bake a cake. To do any good I want to talk about it with people who know more than me!—Don't you see?—It's a sort of loneliness, just to go on reading and reading—passing over things I don't understand because there's no one to explain. It doesn't lead anywhere—and—oh—It's not only that, Edie—it's everything. When you're always in a house with lots of time you see so many things that want doing—it gets on your nerves—and worries you. Everything's so old and shabby, dear. Not—it's not your fault, not do wonders with it—it's—it's—it's beautiful clean: it's just old—and you know it makes me feel old. . . . and—finished."

It was on the tip of her tongue to say that the old castles he liked so much were much older and shabbier, and hadn't even got roofs, but something told her not to say it. She remained silent and he went on: he was calmer now.

"I meant to start all over again when I left the office—a sort of new life—with new interests—but it's just like the garden, Edie—you can't set wonderful new things in worn out soil and expect them to grow. We've been set here so long, Edie, we've taken root, and I might as well try and change the color and shape of the leaves on an old tree—if you see what I mean."

Edith did not altogether understand, but she was overwhelmingly grateful that such a small thing as a forgotten library book should have given them the chance of drawing together again.

The little tongue of flame had disappeared: she pulled her dressing-gown round her knees.

"I'm so glad you told me, Tom. We can see everything together now, and it'll be so different. We've lots to be thankful for—we're both well—and we're not really poor. We can think out lots of ways of passing the time."

He quivered at that. "It's terrible to think of it like that, Edie—it's terrible to think of just 'passing the time' when there's not much left and it's so terribly precious."

"But there are things to do, Tom!—we can do all sorts of useful things!—things to make the house better, too. We'll both start making mats to-morrow—you know, those big woollen ones—they're easy and it's quite fascinating work—you can go down here by the fire in place of this thing—and mine'll go in the hall."

Mats! He smiled for the first time and Edith was delighted to see that he was pleased. Mats!—he thought—the man who was to emerge as an inspired historian—sitting by the fire making mats.

"We could do up some of the rooms ourselves—lots of people do nowadays—all the inside painting and everything—and I can help in your reading! I'll read, too—the same books after you and then we can talk about them. Perhaps we could both join some society and go to meetings and things."

They rose and went up to bed. They were silent but neither slept. Both heard the whirr and strike of the dining-room clock long into the small hours of the morning.

To confess failure, thought Mr. Baldwin, might in itself be claimed as a minor success; but to admit that one is facing a blind alley does not flatten walls and produce a distant horizon.

Still, his confession to Edith had come as a heaven-sent relief. Even if it had humiliated him, the broad gates of sympathy that Edith had thrown open had given outlet to his pent-up, brooding disillusionment. He felt a happiness that he had not known since the night of his retirement: he was able to call a truce with himself; gather his demoralised forces; recognise them and prepare for a new campaign in a short season of rest.

His original plans had been based upon a wrong foundation. Sensational achievement needed more than he was prepared to risk. It would mean a gamble—the selling of everything he possessed, the making of a hazardous journey into the wilds and a return with unique discoveries. Only then could he write books and gain the authority to lecture.

For Edith's sake these wild dreams would have to go. Too many men, all more experienced than he, were engaged upon the research work he had planned to do in England, and to persist in this would be a vain and futile waste of time. For a little while he was content to rest, confident that with calm and reasoned reflection a new horizon of endeavor would reveal itself.

Edith wasted no time in playing her own part. On the day after her husband's confession she returned from her morning's shopping with an unwieldy parcel containing the necessary ingredients for two large mats of tasteful design. There were two threading hooks, a box of gaily-colored wool and two broad pieces of canvas upon which the designs of the mats were traced.

The whole thing was a great success. Although Mr. Baldwin scoffed at it and said it was an old woman's job and a waste of time, he soon got fascinated by it.

To sit opposite each other for hours in the evening and try to draw conversation from dry reservoirs was costing disaster, but for each to sit with the beginnings of a useful mat upon their knees, to dip into a common basket of stubby lengths of wool and to thread them deftly into their allotted spaces meant long periods of unnoted, sympathetic silence, and dinner was frequently upon them before it was expected.

AT length one day there came the inspiration that Mr. Baldwin had been waiting for. It came, in fact, from Edith. She had been trying to read his history books in order to discuss them with him but she soon realised its futility. She understood little of the hopelessly dull tones he was trying to digest and she frankly confessed that the ecclesiastical troubles of the fourteenth century were Greek to her.

He did not tell her that they were Greek to him as well, but it pleased him to know of her failure. There had been too much suggestion of late that Edith, still with her normal occupations around her, and capable of doing them successfully, was the strong protecting partner—but by chance her confession of failure contained the inspiration.

"Why don't they write the stuff in an interesting human way that ordinary people can understand? There's nothing between children's books and great dull things that aren't written for ordinary people at all."

He did not say much in reply, but he went for a long walk that night.

Impelled by a new restless excitement, he knew exactly what Edith meant and there must be thousands like her. Thousands would enjoy a new interest in history if it were given to them in an interesting, intelligent way. The books he had been trying to read had defeated him because they were written by a man without a glimmer of humor or humanity; his failure had demoralised him and suddenly he began to thank his stars that he had failed.

He saw now the colossal mistake that had nearly broken his heart. He had been trying to become a dry-as-dust historian like the author of his books; he delighted in history for its romance and humanity—not for its intricate technicalities of religion and politics.

The murder of Becket was exciting but the reasons for it were dull; what they had to eat on the Field of the Cloth of Gold was infinitely more interesting than what they talked about. Action, swelling, swearing, marching men—grand processions—banquets and tattered banners were the things that stirred him and those were the things that he would rescue from these musty books, bring to life, sharpen and light up for the thousands who had no patience for ten-volume slabs of dullness.

After dinner that night he began an essay upon the Roman Invasion. He called it "Enter Caesar" and when it was finished he gave it to Edith to read. She was entranced.

"It's wonderful, Tom!—It's twice as good as all those stodgy old books put together!—I never knew you could write like that!"

"Did you feel it—hold you?" he asked; "did you feel you wanted to go on?"

"Wanted to go on!—I was disappointed when it was over! It was a lovely bit where the Ancient Britons picked up big stones off the beach and threw them at the Romans when they'd used all their arrows!"

He laughed self-consciously. "That's only imagination, of course—but I expect they did."

"It's imagination that the man who wrote those books never had. That's why you've made it worth reading about and he didn't."

She pressed him to send it to a publisher. They selected one from their Sunday paper who was advertising a book about the Emancipation of Crete, and first thing on Monday morning Mr. Baldwin went out to get an envelope big enough to take his manuscript flat. He enclosed a letter suggesting he should write say, a dozen such episodes in the same style and have them published in one volume.

Christmas came with a shy flutter of snow, and Mrs. Baldwin's sister from Beaconsfield brought her husband to spend the day. The year turned with a swish of black frost and all the while Mr. Baldwin's ears were developing an acute sense for the snick of the gate-latch and the heavy boots of the postman.

Every night now, after Edith had gone to bed, he sat at the dining-room table surrounded by paper and pencils and open books: he wrote "The Landing of the Conqueror" and "Runnymede: England Asserts Her Freedom." He even toyed with a night of fancy—of King John losing the Crown Jewels in the Wash—but he finally decided to stick to fact. Edith read each as it was written and declared them perfect.

The arrival of the Christmas Sales catalogues brought many cruel false alarms. Mr. Baldwin had discovered in the past that when you deliberately wait for a letter and watch every post for its arrival, the letter never



comes. So he would lie in bed towards the postman's time and say to himself again and again, "I don't expect a letter today; of course there won't be a letter today." But that did not work either—because sure enough there wasn't a letter.

But it came at last: by the unusual post at eleven o'clock. Edith was on the point of going shopping and Mr. Baldwin had just come in for his break in the morning's gardening.

Edith collected the letter from the mat; she knew it immediately by the name on the back of it. She took it to her husband and left him to open it alone, but she could not bear the suspense of waiting until she had returned from shopping: she stood in the hall, slowly putting on her gloves.

The silence in the dining-room seemed interminable: then she heard him moving about, and the rattle of the brass curtain rings as he flicked back the curtains in his old habit. Her heart fell, for the sound was ominous.

He came out of the dining-room and said, "D'you want to see it?"

The envelope, carefully slit, lay on the table, and beside it lay the essay. He held the letter out to her. The publisher regretted that there was no demand.

Mr. Baldwin was surprised by the vehemence of his wife's outburst. What did publishers know about what people wanted? Look at the stuff they published!—and why couldn't they have written sooner instead of keeping them in suspense?

"I suppose they get lots of things to read," said Mr. Baldwin. He was quite calm: he seemed scarcely to mind. He was putting on his gardening gloves as he spoke, and went almost at once through the drawing-room and back to the garden.

Edith read the letter again, and looked at the essay, beautifully written in Tom's clear round hand. It seemed strange and unfamiliar after its long absence. She glanced through the drawing-room windows before she left, and saw him kneeling on an old cushion, weeding the path.

To observant people in Brondesbury Terrace Mr. Baldwin became a "character"—to some rather a tragic one, to others a figure of fun, according to the way they thought about such things. They would see him potter out in his overcoat and new brown-kid gloves, potter down the road and potter back. Sometimes he would disappear in the direction of the Park and not be seen for an hour; at other times he would merely go the length of the road.

At the days drew out, the darkness no longer shrouded his departure with his wife for their evening's shopping—in March they went by twilight, by April in broad daylight, and often the Harrington family, who lived opposite, got some free amusement out of the way the old man and lady returned, the old man walking a few paces in front, impatiently swinging round and waiting at the gate for the old lady.

"They've had another row!" said the Harrington family. "Poor old thing—the way he nags her."

They often noticed the old lady sitting at her bedroom window the whole afternoon; sometimes for a part of the evening: they would see her open the dining-room window, and laugh when the old man slammed it again a few minutes later.

"There he goes again! Isn't he getting old!"

"They must be on good terms today, he's been to get a bag of cakes."

"Sort of old boy who'll do himself one day," said Mr. Potter from the

large house. "There was a case in the paper yesterday. Fellow like that with nothing to do ought to be put into a Home."

But even the most observant neighbors failed to attach any significance to the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin on Saturday the 25th October at two o'clock in the afternoon. "Off to the pictures," thought Miss Freeland next door.

But they were not off to the pictures. Neither Miss Freeland nor anyone else in Brondesbury Terrace who saw them go out so normally had the faintest notion of the star that was guiding the footsteps of Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin that afternoon.

Saturday, the 25th October, a date that Tom and Edith Baldwin were to remember with feelings close to reverence: a date of deliverance.

**T**OWARDS the end of the first winter of her husband's retirement, Mrs. Baldwin began to lose all confidence in her power to help him. It became impossible when every word was taken as a rebuke or an accusation of laziness to be angrily denied: she began to feel towards him as one would to an old, sick animal—to be fed, occasionally soothed, but for the most part to be left alone.

She persuaded him to send his essays to several other publishers, but his faith in them had gone, and it was difficult to endure his gloating "I told you so," when they were returned.

It was hard to understand why the failure of those essays should have so broken his spirit. He had undertaken them so light-heartedly.

But beyond doubt their failure had marked the beginning of a terrible change in him. One by one his interests faded, and all that came to replace them was a morbid concern for his health. He would put on two woollen jerseys before venturing into the garden, then button his overcoat to his neck and return in half-an-hour with fear in his face and the news that he was dripping with perspiration and would catch a chill.

On her return from shopping Mrs. Baldwin would often find the thermometer lying out of its case on their bedroom dressing-table. His history books had given place to a Medical Dictionary that he would study in fearful silence, set aside with sudden resolution and timidly return to again and again. When she tried to persuade him to come away to a hotel at the seaside he had fiercely enquired where the money was to come from.

The lengthening days brought a measure of relief to Edith. It ended for a while the dreaded hours of sitting opposite one another over the fire. She could sit for long evenings by her unlit bedroom window or take her work into the Park, but always the sight of her in a hat would bring the eternal "Where are you going?" and the closing of the front door the maddening "Where have you been?"

There were times when he was pitifully anxious to please her. One evening he went alone and returned with a small jade brooch that she had admired while shopping on the previous evening; at other times he would return with a bag of cakes for tea.

But there were tiny crises in a desert of petty quarrels—nagging over money—little arguments that would die away, fester and break out again and drag on for days—rising at times to terrible bursts of temper: "Why don't you read the papers properly and find something sensible to talk about!"

And sometimes her own patience would collapse under the strain and she would feel her voice rising to a shrill cry: "Go out!—join a club or something!—get some friends! For heaven's sake do something!"

"What the devil can I join?" "The Bowling Club in the Park! I see them enjoying themselves every night!"

"Those idiotic old bores!—I'm not dead yet!"

And once, in an agony of spirit she cried out: "Go to a Public House and get drunk!—anything!—anything!"

She had never seen such a wild look come into his eyes.

"I will!" He crushed on a hat—went out into the twilight without his stick or overcoat and slammed the door.

It frightened her, and she was ashamed. An hour passed, and she was terrified: she pictured him lying helpless in the Park with a bottle clenched in his hand; then the gate squeaked and he came in quite normally with a pound of eating apples.

Worst of all were the long silences after a quarrel: sometimes a whole day without a word: a half-hour of silent torture at lunch—another at dinner, while Edith wondered whether he or she, or both of them, were going mad. She hated him; despised him; and pitied him. His eyes never met hers except when he was carried away by anger, and then for a horrid moment she would see the eyes of a hostile stranger.

And this was to go on now till the end—until they died. The days began to draw in, and with the gathering darkness came the nameless dread of another winter.

Then came a golden autumn evening, and Edith was sitting at work by her bedroom window. Through the gap between the houses opposite she had a glimpse of the Park—of two elms that met and intertwined their branches. The dusky sunset behind them brought the memory of a walk that she and Tom had once been very fond of—a walk particularly suited to an autumn afternoon. It began unexpectedly in a right of way through a farmyard into unfrequented fields—three miles of woods and meadows that rose gently to a crest that looked down upon the little village of Welden in its valley of gorse and elms.

They would reach the crest in the dusk, and the twinkling lights below would summon them forward to an old-fashioned cake shop in the village—to a glowing wood fire and an alcove, hot muffins and a generous pot of tea. An hour of drowsy rest: a stroll through the night to the rural station and home in time for dinner.

It occurred to Edith that she might persuade Tom to take this walk again. It was a forlorn hope, but to do it once and enjoy it might lead to a weekly habit that would draw him out of his desperate stagnation and bring new scenes and thoughts to stimulate him.

It was time for dinner: she put her work aside, tidied herself and went downstairs. There was a mustiness in the dining-room, for Tom insisted upon closed windows now that the autumn was coming. The room was in twilight and he was sitting by the window reading the evening paper in the scanty light. His latest fad was to save electricity by sitting in the darkness.

He glanced up as she came in and switched on the light.

"Well?" he said, "what have you been doing?"

"Odds and ends," she said.

There was silence until Ada had



brought the dinner in. He was in a quiet friendly mood, and Edith decided to seize the opportunity before the inevitable squabble began.

"I was thinking just now about those walks we used to go on Saturday afternoons. Do you remember how you used to hurry home for lunch—and how we used to take the bus out to Stanmore—and that tea-shop in Welden?"

"Those were good days," he said. "Let's go next Saturday—over the same ground—exactly as we used to."

He looked at her as though she had said, "Let's drown ourselves," but before he could reply she hurried on with a desperate eagerness: shy wings of memory went fluttering through the tips of the larch woods, over bramble hedges and rutted fields, they descended abruptly and breathlessly to anticipate one of the objections he was certain to make—

"Tea about one-and-six—fares half-a-crown—it wouldn't cost much compared with the fun we'd get."

He listened with the sidelong, impatient glance that was his habit when she talked too much.

"Do you realise that walk's a three mile climb uphill?"

"Well—what of it?" she demanded. "What of it!—you used to get tired out when we did it fifteen years ago."

"I don't mind."

"You mightn't—but what about me? I suppose you've forgotten I've had lumbago for nearly a month."

"Exercise is good for lumbago."

He snorted, and helped himself to potatoes: she saw her plan tottering to extinction and gave a final, despairing puff to the dying spark.

"You might come for my sake. Tom! I feel I want a good walk. I can't read a map like you can: I'd lose my way if I went alone."

"Why didn't you think of it in the summer instead of waiting for this treacherous east wind?"

"Because it's an autumn walk"—she thrust in a glowing picture of the tea-shop—so eagerly that his supercilious smile began to give place to surprise. But all he said was: "Getting hot and sitting in a cold train. Are you going to answer for that?"

"But we shall cool down at tea!"

"And then go out of a hot tea-shop into the night air."

"For heaven's sake, Tom!—we're not invalids!"

He looked down at his plate, and she saw him flush. She expected a burst of temper, but he said quietly: "I can do it, if you can."

"Of course I can."

The battle was won. When he rose from dinner he went to his bureau, searched in a drawer and produced a tattered Ordnance Map that had served them on many a past adventure into unknown fields.

With a good deal of argument they traced the route of the walk that Edith had spoken of: they pored over it—their heads nearer together than for many a weary day, and when at last they folded the map Mr. Baldwin went upstairs and routed out his old walking boots.

He took them for a trial in the Park next morning and pronounced them in good running order, and when, at two o'clock on the following Saturday afternoon Miss Freeland thought her dull old neighbors were going to the Pictures, she was quite wrong.

"Over ten years—as long as that!" "It must be," said Mrs. Baldwin. "I wonder why?"

The bus was beyond Hendon, and the discussion as to when they had last come out this way had arisen from

the changed appearance of the country bordering the main road. To the best of their recollection it had opened out into green fields when Hendon had been left behind, but now there was little to be seen but rows of small new houses with an occasional sports ground in the distance.

But there was nothing depressing about the change: the long road was buzzing with the light-hearted business of Saturday afternoon; people were working in almost every garden; little groups of young men hurried by with small bags and dangling football boots; a party of excited girls with hockey sticks travelled with them for a mile; then clattered off and disappeared up a lane towards some distant goal-post.

"That was there! I remember it," said Mr. Baldwin, pointing to a tall, sad house lying a little back from the road. He looked at it in silence, as if drawing some memory from it, he followed it round with his head as the bus drew away then turned suddenly to Edith and said:

"What have we been doing these last ten years?—I mean—it seems extraordinary we've never been out here since."

Edith gave a little laugh. "I don't know. You just—get out of doing things."

They had the two front seats of the bus; he lowered his eyes from the road in front of him and looked across at her with an earnest smile. "You know, Edie, I think we were letting ourselves run to seed. Fancy forgetting the country was only half-an-hour away!"

EDITH dared not rejoice too soon. Too often, in the past hopeless year, she had known brief moments when he had pulled himself together and been as eager and as happy as this. And yet, his present mood was more genuine than anything she had seen since the first days of his retirement.

He was sitting well forward on his seat, tapping the floor impatiently with his walking stick—pointing out old landmarks—deploring the appearance of new ones, but fretting all the time to be off, and walking. He seemed to have forgotten all about his lumbago.

At least the beginning of their favorite walk had not been disturbed: they saw to their joy the battered old signboard: "FOOTPATH TO WELDEN." It seemed to have shrunk back into the trees to avoid the greedy paws of London. The same old smelly saravard with a heap of steaming manure—the same big, ramshackle gate that had to be heaved up before it could be opened, the same broad, rutted track beside the stubble field—in ten minutes there was not a sign of night.

"It looks as if they knew this was our walk," said Mr. Baldwin, "and left it for us!"

"It's lovely," said Edith.

They came to the first wood, and some young rabbits went bounding away into the undergrowth; they picked some blackberries, and took a rest upon a stile.

"Think of all the things that have happened since we got over this stile last time," mused Mr. Baldwin. He fumbled for his tobacco pouch, filled his pipe and lit it. He sat looking into the wood—slowly swinging his stick—puffing little clouds of smoke into the quiet, frosty air.

"You know, Edie—I often wish I'd gone in for Natural History. I don't know what any of these trees are called."

"Those are just thorn trees," began Edith, "and of course those are silver

but he broke in as though he had not heard.

"If only we'd got a bit of land like this at home—something to clear and really work in—you know—sort of virgin soil—with tough things growing in it. There's nothing in our garden the spot enough spirit to catch hold of your trouser legs and tear them."

There was a nip in the air, and they rose to go on. Far away to the left, behind a group of trees, some tiny red and white specks were eddying to and fro at football, but ahead of them the path wound slowly upwards in solitude. In her eagerness to encourage her husband Edith had not questioned her own ability to cover three rough, uphill miles, but half the distance was behind them before she began to feel fatigue. The walk was turning out a wonderful success and tiring feet were nothing to the exhilaration she was feeling.

If only they could do this every week! It would lift the dread clouds of winter; it might bring him new interests. His birthday was in a fortnight's time and she decided to get him a Natural History book and possibly something about country rambles.

They frequently paused to recollect small incidents that had happened in the past: a spot where Mrs. Baldwin's shoe-lace had once broken and the bank they had rested on to make repairs; the wild corner of a meadow where on two succeeding walks they had discovered a hedgehog in exactly the same place, and the ever-green oak that had sheltered them from a sudden shower. In half-an-hour they found more to say than in the past two months.

It was half-past four as they climbed the last gentle slope towards the great that concealed the village of Welden in its valley. The sun was beginning to set behind them; there would be a mist, a trail of smoke—a few flickering lights beckoning them down the slope to the log fire, toast and tea.

The last half mile downhill was the best part of the whole walk, with its grey solitary climes and clumps of gorse—a lovely little valley that marked the twilight, peaceful end of their journey.

"Thank goodness nobody's tried to spoil it," said Mr. Baldwin as he reached the summit a little ahead of his wife.

And then he stopped dead. She saw his jaw drop and heard his exclamation of astonishment.

In a moment she was beside him, and they stood together in speechless dismay. There below them lay the valley: the sun was sinking beneath a dark strip of cloud, and as they looked it sent a long pale stream of light across the land as though to say: "Look what's happened while you've been away!"

The desolate charm of it—the wild, fragrant peace—had gone for ever: through the soft gorse field stretched broad, hideous gables of naked yellow clay, and clustering along them like evil fungus to a fallen tree were hideous new houses—stacks of bricks—pyramids of sewage pipes—piles of white timber—mud-stained lorries and sheets of hunched tarpaulins—a nightmare of perverted progress.

Aloof and unchanged lay their footpath and the hedge that skirted it, for it lay some little distance from the ghastly mess—unchanged, from this distance, lay Welden Village, but a new road had buried itself in its very heart. Untouched, for the moment, were the solitary chimneys brooding over the desolation beneath them—silently awaiting their fate.



"We might have known," whispered Mr. Baldwin.

Edith could not reply, for suddenly a leaden weariness had fallen on her. A three mile walk over rough, uphill ground was no light undertaking, but she had faced it stubbornly and joyfully because of the things it had promised them. And now, at the moment of its climax, when it seemed as if nothing could prevent the success of the adventure, the whole thing was shattered by the view before them.

She knew that they could never repeat this walk with the knowledge that the destruction of their favorite valley awaited them at its end. Their tea-shop had, probably, been swept away by now; they would drag themselves to the station—there would be a cold, hungry journey home—the same sordid squabbling would begin again—it would begin again for another hopeless, pitiless winter.

They walked on in silence, their eyes averted from the houses as from something naked and unclean. All that they wanted now was to pass it by and forget it if they could. Even the path was theirs no longer; it had been churned by the hobnailed boots of workmen—paper bags hung suspended in the gorse bushes—bottles lay in the ditch—a filthy rag of a waistcoat assaulted them.

At one point the footpath led them within a few yards of the new road, and they could not avoid a repugnant glance at the houses beside it. Three appeared to be finished; two more were completed except for their roofs, and another half dozen stood in various stages of stark, skeletoned ugliness.

But new built, empty houses have an attraction for human beings that new haystacks have for cows, and despite their disgust and indignation, Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin could not resist a moment's pause.

In different circumstances they might have admitted them quite pleasant. The first was square built and snug looking—cream walled and green shuttered, with a sturdy green front door. The dust beside it was entirely different but not incongruous: it had the irregular, inconsequential charm of a Tudor cottage, with oak beams and gables. And each stood comfortably in its own land.

"They'll be falling to bits in five years," said Mr. Baldwin. "The first big storm'll wash them away. Jerry built—all show and no strength. I pity the people who live in them. Come on."

"May I show you round?" came a pleasant voice that startled them with its unexpectedness.

When he had recovered from his surprise, Mr. Baldwin discovered a young man beside them—a, pleasant looking young man in a sports coat and grey flannel trousers. He wore no hat, and a big unruly tuft of light brown hair lay across his forehead. He looked more like a tall schoolboy than a young man. Where he had sprung from was a mystery. For a moment ago, Mr. Baldwin and his wife seemed the only living souls in the twilight valley.

The young man appeared to understand their surprise, and began to explain.

"We've only just started this Estate and we're going to make it our best. It's a lovely spot, isn't it? We've just opened a Show House across here. I thought perhaps if you were looking for a nice house..."

"We're not looking for a house," said Mr. Baldwin rather curtly.

"Oh, I'm sorry."

The young man took the snub so pleasantly that Mr. Baldwin felt ashamed of his rudeness.

"I mean," he said, "we should only be wasting your time."

The young man brushed the hair off his forehead and laughed.

"You won't do that because I shall waste it in any case. I'm here to show people round and nobody's turned up this afternoon at all. We've hardly begun advertising it yet you see. I'm new to the job too. If you've got five minutes to spare I can practise on you. It would do me good."

Despite his annoyance Mr. Baldwin could not help a smile. There was something attractive and disarming about the boy. Although the afternoon was cold he was not even wearing a waistcoat; his tweed jacket was open and a striped, colored tie swayed carelessly across his chest. He looked as if he ought to be playing football somewhere instead of standing about in this desolate place on a Saturday afternoon.

He was one of the new kind of boys one saw about these days rather like Musgrave at the office. They looked so much as if they ought to be playing games that people took it for granted that they would be no good at work—and yet they tackled their jobs with an inspiring sort of eagerness to get on and succeed. Mr. Baldwin glanced at the boy, then across at the little, cream painted house that gleamed in the dusk.

"Well," he said, "if you're sure you don't mind, would you like to look over it, Edith?"

"Very much indeed," said Mrs. Baldwin.

They followed the boy across the mass of yellow gorse that would one day be a road; they crossed a deep trench of glistening pipes and through the oak gate of the Show House.

"I must apologise for all this," said their guide, pointing to the rubble-strewn front garden. "It's too late to put down grass this year, but we shall do all that in the spring. It's awfully good, light soil—with lots of gravel underneath." He swung round on Mr. Baldwin with a broad, mischievous smile. "That's the way to begin, isn't it? Tell the people about the soil!"

"That's the way," said Mr. Baldwin, with an artful smile back.

He was beginning to enter into the fun. It was a good joke to go round a house like this: to be one of the actors in a sort of dress rehearsal. He beamed and said: "I knew this valley before you were born, my boy, but checked himself for fear of putting the young man off his stride.

THE front door stood open and their guide switched on the light in the entrance hall. He patted a strange flat metal affair let into the wall.

"Central heating, you see. This radiator keeps the hall nice and warm; there are radiators in all the rooms, of course."

"Is it hot now?" asked Mrs. Baldwin in surprise.

"Oh, yes. Feel it. The house still wants a bit of drying. It was only finished last week."

Even with the front door open and the frosty air curling in there was a delightful warmth flavored with wood shavings, fresh paint and new furniture.

"The radiators are heated directly from the kitchen boiler. There's no extra expense at all."

"Very convenient," murmured Mrs. Baldwin. Her eyes were roving curiously round the entrance hall. At home there was nothing but a high-ceilinged, narrow passage, crowded with the coat-stand and umbrella-rack, with doors leading stuffily off

from it. But this hall was far more spacious: almost a room in itself, with the stairs leading up at an attractive angle and a long, interesting window on the first landing.

She noticed that the carpet covered the whole floor, and there were no ugly borders of bare, stained boards. It was a warm, generous carpet, a simple powder blue with no tedious designs to grow tired of.

"There's plenty of room for coats and things in here," said the young man, throwing open a spacious cupboard that completely lacked the stale stuffiness of their cupboards at home. It had the freshness of pine needles in it.

The first big surprise was the downstairs cloak-room, with wash-basin and lavatory. All their lives Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin had associated the act of washing with going upstairs: they did this, on an average, six times a day, making an annual ascent equivalent to the conquest of Mount Everest.

"Saves lots of time," said Mr. Baldwin, peering into the compact little closet.

"And here's the dining-room." A bit plain, thought Mr. Baldwin. A funny-looking table and set of chairs that did not look quite finished.

"Weathered oak," said their guide, "the latest thing. Don't you think it's rather attractive?"

It grew on one, certainly. Clean and healthy looking. Perhaps it was because this vigorous young man approved it, but Mr. Baldwin could not imagine feeling bilious after eating a meal from such a table.

But the whole room was so gloriously clean and airy, its very plainness and simplicity captured the imagination and gave one the feeling of being on a ship bound for some high spirited adventure. One could never feel depressed or old in such a room, with such generous windows and bright cream walls.

"Service hatch to kitchen," said the young man, opening a little door beside the fireplace.

And the kitchen itself! Nothing in it, of course—but Edith could picture glistening rows of saucepans on its spotless shelves. It was more like a scientist's laboratory than a kitchen.

"You see how the corners of the floor and ceiling are rounded to make sweeping easy. There's nowhere for dust to collect. Electric stove..."

"Very expensive," said Mr. Baldwin, feeling it high time to put in a little criticism.

"On the contrary," said the young man, "far less expensive than the old-fashioned range."

"But you've got to have a coal fire as well to heat those radiators."

The young man's eyes lit up in triumph. "No, sir!—this boiler scarcely needs any coal at all: it burns up all the kitchen rubbish. You make your rubbish warm your house and give you hot baths! Now let me show you the lounge."

The kitchen and dining-room had already taken most of Mrs. Baldwin's breath away, and the lounge removed the little that remained. She saw it first in semi-darkness, with a panel of sunset upon one wall and a twilight stretch of the valley through the broad windows that opened boldly upon the garden. Then the young man switched on the light and the room was floating in a soft amber glow.

It took in the full breadth of the house, with deep bow windows upon the road, but there was nothing gaunt about it: there seemed to be nooks and crannies—unexpected little alcoves and recesses—an intriguing



little oval window like a ship's porthole high up in the wall.

The settee drawn up to the fireplace looked almost too comfortable to be real, the armchairs opened their arms to her when she looked at them. The fireplace itself was of small, red-floored bricks; it looked like the arched gateway to a miniature Tudor mansion and made one think of crackling logs and moorland peat. The color scheme was impossible to define at a glance: all kinds of color sang out from the cushions and curtains, and seemed to blend themselves into a bold, light-hearted melody.

There were no odds and ends—no knick-knacks of protruding furniture to bruise the thighs. There was a friendliness, a simplicity—a clean freshness—a gaiety about this room. It thrilled Edith and saddened her, for it was no more than a dream. In a few minutes they would be on the road to the village and the magic of this little house would be a memory: a dwindling, dark patch in a darkening valley.

Twice, it seemed, she heard the word "bedrooms"—and then a quiet laugh brought her to a consciousness of other things: her husband had gone, but the young man was standing by the door.

"Would you like to see the bedrooms?"

She followed him, wishing very much that there might have been some means of keeping the bedrooms for another day: her mind was buzzing with a score of little things that were searching for places to settle in her memory; she would have preferred to give them time to sort themselves out before opening the doors to new ones.

Tom was standing motionless in the window recess of the chief bedroom as she entered; he was obviously impressed, for he had removed his hat. He turned his head and said: "Come here."

She went over to him.

"Funny to see our old footpath from the window of a house," he said.

It was certainly a queer experience. From this window they could trace the footpath up the side of the valley until it disappeared over the crest. They could see the point from which a few minutes ago they had looked down in such astonishment and disgust, and Edith wondered what her husband was thinking now.

The young man looked surprised at Mr. Baldwin's remark.

"You're not strangers then, sir?"

"No," said Mr. Baldwin, with an attempt at tranquility, "we've come down that footpath many a time; we used to come miles to enjoy the view of Weiden Valley and now you've— you've done this to it."

The young man seemed at a loss for a reply. Then he said: "I'm afraid somebody would have built sooner or later. We shan't spoil it: we're leaving a lot of open spaces; every house'll be in its own ground. Somebody might have packed it with horrible rows of cheap things and ruined it. Besides, nobody can touch your footpath."

"No, but—it's a pity, you know," Mr. Baldwin felt he had fixated out rather lamely. He turned and inspected the bedrooms. There were four altogether—two were very small, and although the white-discolored walls made up for it, Mr. Baldwin felt it was high time to assert himself in earnest.

"Our bedrooms at home are much bigger than this. It must be rather depressing, sleeping in such small places."

"Of course," said the young man, "they are small, but lots of people prefer them small nowadays. You see there are wash basins in all of them

—hot and cold water night and day—and you see the furniture's almost all built in." He opened an unexpectedly large cupboard that was fitted like a wardrobe.

The basins were a revelation: the Baldwins had heard about them, but had never actually seen them. They had imagined them to be rather disgusting, and, insanitary—but Mr. Baldwin could not help picturing himself getting out of the sturdy, weathered oak bed, strolling to the basin, turning a tap and shaving in luxury.

He thought of the little can of hot water that Ada brought up—the rich, city washstand-stand and ungainly jug and basin—the eternal search for a match to light the geyser.

The young man treated the bathroom with a casualness that must have been artificial. It was impossible to be calm and blasé in the face of that final, glittering wonder. The walls were covered to the height of four feet with shining white tiles and above the tiles lay an azure sea, with sailing ships heeling to the wind.

THE bath itself was partly sunk into the floor and might have come from the palace of a Roman Emperor: there were glistening taps; recesses in the wall for soap and flannels—a bell you could press while in the bath—and a shower.

"We're much obliged," said Mr. Baldwin at the gate: "very interesting." They had been in the house far longer than they had realised, for stars were shining overhead and a frosty crust was gathering upon the clay ruts of the road.

"Pity we don't want a new house," he added in a weak voice.

"I suppose that's a lot of money," said Mrs. Baldwin.

"More than I could afford," replied the young man with a wistful laugh: "but it's extraordinarily cheap considering the way it's built. You see, when you put up a number of houses on the same Estate you naturally cut down costs all round."

"How much is that one?" asked Mr. Baldwin.

"Well, the one you've seen is £1175. We're not building anything to spoil the value of the place. Prices range from 1950 to £1350 according to size. Furnishings cheap because so much is built in: you don't need wash-stands or wardrobes or old-fashioned stuff like that. That house was furnished complete for £350."

"Really?" said Mrs. Baldwin. She could scarcely believe it. She would have said a thousand, "£350?"

"That's all." A little white card gleamed in the darkness. "If you know of anyone looking for a house—will you give them my card? It'll do me a lot of good if you did happen to put someone my way."

"Certainly," said Mr. Baldwin. "Certainly I will. Good evening—and thank you."

He wondered for a moment if a tip were expected, but the way the young man smiled and turned away was quite sufficient to show that everything was all right.

"I must go and turn those lights off," he said. "Good night."

"Nice young chap," said Mr. Baldwin, as they picked their way back to the footpath. "Ought to do well."

After a silence he said, "I think it was the way he showed us the house that made it seem so attractive."

"Perhaps so," replied Edith after a thoughtful pause.

Lights had been shining from every window when they left the house. When Mrs. Baldwin glanced back she saw one solitary panel glowing through the darkness. Even as she looked it dis-

appeared, and the house was swallowed in the night.

The moon was rising as they reached the village, and when the by-lane joined the old world High Street they were delighted to see their fancy cakes and doughnuts as of old. Even the buxom woman (whom they had always assumed, from the name over the door, to be Mrs. Chambers) was still there, as rosy and as buxom as ever.

"Well, this is a surprise!" exclaimed Mrs. Chambers. "It's just about this time of a Saturday afternoon you used to arrive in the old days. Toasted scones?—some nice assorted cakes?—will that fire be too hot?—it's certainly come over chilly."

They confirmed that their train left at 6.24 and settled down comfortably for an hour's rest. Mrs. Baldwin was ready for it: a three mile walk in untried shoes had tired her more than she cared to admit, but their interesting visit to the Show House had compensated in a curious way for the ruin of their favorite walk.

She was even beginning to wonder whether the houses had ruined it after all. It might possibly add interest to the walk for every time they came over the crest and down the hill there would be something new to see.

Having actually been inside one of the houses, made all the difference. They would not be strangers; they might even meet their pleasant young friend again and have a joke with him about the number of houses he had sold.

With all her heart she envied the lucky people who were to live in Weiden Valley, for to them would come the romance of pioneers, and however old they might be in years they would have youth in spirit, for no one could feel age in such a house as the one they had just seen.

Tom was very silent after tea, but not morosely silent. He sat puffing his pipe—feet up on the window seat—the wood fire flickering in his face. The walk had brought a healthy color to his cheeks and had obviously dispersed his lumbago. When he caught her looking at him he pulled out his man and began to study it.

Edith closed her eyes and tried to doze, but all kinds of odds and ends kept passing beneath her closed lids. One thing that kept pushing itself forward was the wonderful built-in dresser in the Show House kitchen, with an ironing board and pastry board that drew out like drawers.

The wind had risen while they were resting in the tea-shop: a few dark rags of cloud were scurrying across the moon and the lane to the station was pregnant with power and danger from the massive, straining trunks of elms. Some pigs were squealing in a farmyard: a man with a bucket came out of the gate and said, "Good evening."

"Good evening," said Mr. Baldwin, feeling like the village squire. Then he said to Edith: "You know, you might easily be a hundred miles from London here."

They said very little to one another during the journey home. They had the compartment to themselves and Mrs. Baldwin was able to sit with her legs resting along the seat.

She had a pain like toothache in her shin bones and the small of her back was so stiff that she resolved upon a hot muslin bath before going to bed. It would be a poor business if the walk cured Tom's lumbago and gave her an attack in exchange.

Mr. Baldwin stretched his legs along the opposite seat, but after a while he grew tired of looking into the carriage: he brought his feet down and sat for a long while in silence with his eyes upon the moonlit, ghostly fields.



When they reached home, a circular in a halfpenny envelope lay on the hall mat. How cold and ill-lit and clammy the passage seemed—how badly the damp stains showed up on the wallpaper above the coat rack. Edith, on her way home, had begun to scheme and plan. She had wondered whether they could possibly save up a little and gradually transform their house into something like the one they had seen in the valley.

They could easily have the depressing wallpaper taken off and a bright cream distemper in its place; central heating—wash basins—she had resolved to make secret enquiries in Malden Vale—but the first cold whiff of stagnant air in the passage dispersed her dreams—the whole house would need pulling down and re-shaping, for nothing could brighten this narrow, hopeless passage and the steep cramped stairs.

She began to wish they had not accepted the young man's invitation to see the new house—for though the memories might fade she would never be able to quench the sadness and discontent that they would leave behind.

But although the shabbiness of the old house destroyed her plans it did not depress her spirit, for the walk had splendidly justified its purpose. They both felt bigger and stronger; their hands and faces tingled. The long uphill climb had given both of them a new pride in themselves; they had both been through a grueling test and emerged with flying colors. Despite the new house in Welden Valley she was confident that Tom would want to go again.

She went to her bedroom and changed her stockings; there was a blither under one toe but otherwise her feet appeared all right. And because she felt well and happy she put on the black velvet dress that was reserved for special occasions. Tom's cheerful whistling in the bathroom drew her thoughts away from the drabness of the bedroom, and she went happily downstairs.

She picked up the evening paper that Tom had been reading in the train, and stood by the fire with it, waiting for him to come down to dinner. She could not avoid a glance at the heavy old-fashioned mantelpiece and the big cumbersome mirror above it; she tried to concentrate upon the news, but she was thinking all the time of a sturdy, simple fireplace in mellowed brick, and the romantic little oval window high up in the wall, framing the evening sky and the swaying tips of an elm.

Her eyes wandered to the Stop Press column of the paper; there were a few football results and a blank space below—but in this space were some faint, pencilled figures. She wondered what they were, and fumbled for her reading glasses on the mantelpiece. She could see at once, by their neatness, that the figures were in Tom's handwriting, and first of all was written—£1175.

Something gripped her weary shin bones; it seemed to gather and race through her body until it touched her heart and set it wildly throbbing. £1175!—the figures that had been buzzing in her brain for the past three hours—since the boy had casually mentioned them in the valley. So Tom had been thinking about it, too. She had thought that he had put the house from his mind in the first steps away from it towards the tea-shop, for he had avoided all mention of it on the journey home.

There were more figures underneath—uncertain and difficult to decipher: it was a small sum—£1000, £200, £37/10/0—added up to £1237/10/0 and underneath were a few unmeaning little squares and cross-crossed lines

—a kind of futuristic picture of his thoughts.

She dropped the paper as he came in, briefly rubbing his hands. There was a glow in his cheeks and he looked at her with steady smiling eyes.

"How d'you feel, Edie? Tired?"

"Legs ache a bit—but not tired."

"Mine ache, too."

"But the lumbago's gone," she said with a mischievous smile.

He was guarded about that. "I don't know yet. I'll tell you in the morning. It was a risk."

"You're looking awfully well, though."

"I feel it, Edie. It was a good idea of yours—that walk."

They talked mainly of the walk as they had their dinner: the woods, and the tea-shop, and the village, and although Tom grew indignant at the way the bus route had been disfigured by new factories, he did not mention the houses in Welden Valley.

When dinner was over, he rose and stood lighting his pipe by the fire.

"I bet you aren't going out for a walk tonight!" said Edith.

He made no answer for a moment. He was just about to say something as Ada came in to clear away, and he turned abruptly and went to the windows.

By force of habit he looked between the curtains to see if the windows were closed. He usually muttered something about a dangerous draught as he did this, but tonight he said nothing. He gave the curtains an extra pull as if to ensure secrecy and when Ada had made her final departure with the table-cloth, he came and stood by the fire again.

"Edie," he said, "why shouldn't we have one of those houses in Welden Valley?"

**E** DITH looked up breathlessly from her needlework. She did not want to interrupt by saying anything. Her own mind had taken her as yet no further than the question he had asked, but she felt that this must have probed the dark, exciting spaces beyond.

"D'you mean it, Tom? Could we?"

He nodded. "I'd have laughed at the idea a couple of days ago. People like us get timid, you know—fixed down—afraid to move. As we get older we get more and more afraid until at last we think we'd die if anything happened to disturb us." He turned away and stood looking into the fire.

"You know, Edie—we've had a rotten year, haven't we? Nothing wrong with us—enough to eat—plenty of comfort—but, oh, you know—hopeless! It's all so old and dingy here. Nothing to—keep us young. Think of that—that lovely house..."

"That lovely house," whispered Edith.

He swung round eagerly: "You liked it?"

"Liked it?—what a question!"

He was at the table now—he drew up a chair beside her—a sheet of paper before him and a pencil in his hand. He looked like a General planning a battle.

"Look here. This house is ours. It's worth £1000—say £900 at the lowest. We could sell it quite easily. Then I've got £200 in the Bank and £37/10/0 in the Post Office. I've put that by since I retired. You've often thought I've been mean and stingy."

"I've never!"

"Oh, yes, you have—or you ought to have anyway—but—but—I don't

know—money's got on my nerves and I've put it by when there's really no need. Anyway—it'll stand in good stead now." He threw his pencil down.

"There you are, Edie! £1137/10 and the new house is only £1175."

She hated throwing even a thimbleful of cold water.

"But there'd be lots of extras, Tom—fittings—lampshades—and the garden."

"The garden!" His eyes lit up with a new light—"perhaps we'd get a piece with one of those big elms!"

He could sit still no longer: he rose and paced the room; he stood in odd corners where he had never stood before: his eyes took in the walls, the floor, the ceiling; they were measuring the height of the bookcase—the breadth of the sideboard—the shape of the carpet.

"I'd say all this furniture would go in, wouldn't you? This ceiling's higher, of course, but there's a good clear foot above the bookcase there. I'd all go in, wouldn't it, Edie?"

His excitement suddenly seemed to fade into uneasiness and doubt; his last words were more like an appeal for help than a direct question, and she understood what had suddenly come to trouble him.

Her own heart, too, had fallen when she glanced round at the ponderous furniture surrounding them. It was so terribly ugly and depressing in the light of what they had seen that afternoon. She pictured their enormous mahogany sideboard with its ancient scars and musty, unwholesome drawers, wedged against the delicate cream walls of that fragrant little dining-room; the pulen carved oak bookcase, almost black with age, squeezing out the sunlight, hopelessly out of place—would be like a resentful, stooping giant in a fairy house.

Most of the stuff had come from Tom's family home in Colchester, and the drawing-room furniture from her father's vicarage. The bedstead upstairs, with its loose brass knobs, had been bought secondhand when they had married, together with the yellow pine wardrobe and dressing-table.

The rest had come at odd times, from here and there. Nothing really matched, and although it had never pleased her, it had never brought such revulsion as it did now: each room of the Show House was furnished with an entrancing little suite of uniform design.

Their first frantic enthusiasm had been far too wonderful to last; Tom's calculation far too plausible to bear the test of hard reasoning; even as she listened she felt there must be a snag somewhere, and sure enough there was. They would need every penny to buy the new house and to think of a new set of furniture was out of the question.

And yet it would be a mockery to move and be followed by all this faded, depressing furniture; it did not look so bad in a faded house, but in a new house it would look ghastly. It would carry the seeds of the misery they had suffered in the past year, and in a little while it would all spring up again.

Mr. Baldwin still stood by the table, but he was no longer staring at the furniture with eager, critical eyes; he was looking at it sadly and hopelessly; his hands were twitching, and she saw the little droop return to the corners of his mouth. In a moment he would give way, and she knew what the reaction would mean. She knew instinctively that a chance such as this would never in their lives come again.

They would never recapture the reckless spirit of adventure that had swept them for one glorious moment



beyond the timid reasoning of middle age. If the devil had appeared in this moment of need she would gladly have given him her soul for the money to buy the new furniture and sweep this hopeless stuff away. And in answer to her thought came an idea that frightened her: that she fearfully repented that gathered and flashed up again.

Upon the death of her mother, Edith had received some legacies that she had treasured as a sacred trust. There were several rings and two small diamond brooches, halloved by memories and locked away in a small box in her bedroom cupboard. There was also a mysterious gift described by the lawyer as London Chatham & Dover Railway 5 per cent Debentures: she had never seen them and had never quite understood what Debentures were. They sounded like some kind of office furniture.

They had always been locked up in the vaults of the Midland Bank and twice a year a remittance of £10 arrived like a fairy gift which never failed. Tom refused to allow her to spend it on the house, so it went upon new clothing and a few small luxuries, including birthday and Christmas presents. She had been given to understand that these Debentures were worth £400, but she no more thought of disturbing them than she would have pawned her mother's jewellery.

But something had happened this night that had never happened before. To clench her teeth—to abuse her trust and to sell those Debentures might mean the raising of two struggling souls from a living purgatory.

She hardly recognised her voice: it sounded loud and hollow.

"Tom!—we're not going to take a stick of this old stuff with us!—we're going to sweep it all away and start all over again!—absolutely afresh—with lovely new things from things being sent to end! We can do it, Tom!"

He looked at her in astonishment: she was bouncing up and down in her chair as she jerked out the words, and he suddenly felt afraid. Edith had never fainted or had hysterics, but this appeared to be the onset of something very queer. He wondered what he ought to do.

"Why, Edith?—what d'you mean, dear?"

Breathlessly she explained: she was out of her depth when she tried to talk about simple finance, and Debentures were even worse—but one thing she knew: they were worth money: £400; and they weren't going to lie asleep in the Bank for another day—they were coming out to buy glorious furniture: gleaming pots and pans for the kitchen: powder blue carpets: bright chintz curtains—suits of well-there'd oak—everything—everything they needed for their new home in Wellden Valley!

He listened in silence—then shook his head.

"No, Edie dear. It's awfully—good of you—but those Debentures are yours. This is my responsibility."

"They're not mine!" she cried, "they're ours!—everything's ours!"

He began to pace the room again. He had never tried pacing the dining-room before and it made him realise for the first time how hopelessly big and cumbersome everything was.

The old leather chairs were clutching at his knees, imploring to be spared, but he had no time for sentiment. It was a magnificent idea of Edith's: the fresh healthy furniture of the Show Home danced before his eyes: it beckoned and sang to him. He stopped abruptly, sat down beside Edith and laid a hand upon her arm.

"Listen, dear! Even if we buy every-

thing new we shall never need all that money. We'll sell all this: it's good sound stuff and some people like old furniture. We might get enough to buy everything new without touching your money at all!"

"We might," said Edith, looking at the brown stain behind the mirror. "But it's magnificent to have that money in reserve!—it makes it all possible!—his hand closed tightly upon her arm—"It's wonderful, Edie, isn't it?"

He looked up at the clock and then at his watch. He got up and went on apologetically—like a small boy who expects a scolding.

"You know Martins—the furniture shop at the corner of Edgware Road? There's a light in the window all night. I'll just pop down and see if I can get an idea of prices—it'll be interesting."

"Why not let's go together in the morning?"

"Tomorrow's Sunday."

"But we could look in the window." "It won't take half-an-hour. You go to bed, dear. I'll come up and tell you directly I get back."

**M**R. BALDWIN was gone for more than half-an-hour. When he came up to the bedroom he explained that he had gone for a walk round to have a good think. He sat on the foot of the bed, fingering one of the loose brass knobs. "Edie—there's a lovely bedroom suite—the whole thing—bed, dressing table, everything—guess?"

She had not the slightest idea without seeing it, but made a most fortunate attempt: "Twenty pounds!" "Eighteen pound fifteen shillings!" he said triumphantly. "We'll do it, Edie!—we'll do it easily—the whole thing!"

Edith laughed and hitched herself up a little stiffly in bed.

"Tom—I meant to have a hot bath and get rid of this stiffness—and I forgot all about it!"

He threw up his head and laughed so loudly that she had to remind him that Ada was asleep upstairs.

"What about Ada?" he said, "shall we wake her? I suppose we must." Then he bent forward and said in a low, impressive voice: "In the new house you are going to have a hot bath every night and no wretched wheezing old geyser to wait for!"

He got up. "I've just got to work out a few more figures downstairs."

"Don't stay up too late. It's been a tiring day."

"No—only half-an-hour."

She heard him run downstairs. She heard the dining-room door close and a chair being drawn up to the table.

Edith woke to the hum of a fog signal and cold rings to her nostrils. The first white frost of the winter was upon them, and it brought back to her the first days of her husband's retirement a year ago.

He was still heavily asleep beside her. He had come up far later than he had promised, and it must have been past midnight when she half-awakened to hear him stealthily undressing in the dark.

She lay watching the faint, slow trail of mist creep through the curtains and she felt the muffled stillness of the fog-bound Sunday morning. Would this new endeavor fade out as the past ones had? Would they wake to the first fog signals of next year's winter in this bedroom, a little more worn and shabby, and themselves a little more tired?

It had all sounded so easy and magnificent last night, but it was a little too easy and magnificent to be-

Here in the cold light of a frosty, fog-bound morning.

She prepared herself with all her philosophy to meet her husband's awakening. She could picture him turning over and looking at her with dull, ashamed eyes—and saying—"Edie, I thought it all over last night—and I don't think we can do it. You see, dear..."

She did not want him to wake until he had slept his fill. She decided to go down and tell Ada to hold up breakfast for half-an-hour, but when she moved to get out of bed she let out such a gasp of surprise and pain that Tom turned over and opened his eyes.

He was a slow waker, and for a little while he stared at her. She was sitting bolt upright in bed as if she had seen a ghost.

"What's the matter?" he asked.

She gave an uneasy laugh.

"What is it, Edie?"

"I don't know—I can't move. My—my back and legs—they're..."

"Poor old Edie!—it was that walk." He raised himself and cried out: "Ooh!—mine're the same."

It was a huge relief: for a moment she had had visions of crippling rheumatism.

"My legs—they're like bits of board."

"Bound to be after a walk like that. You ought to have had that hot bath last night. I tell you what. I'll go and turn on the geyser and tell Ada we'll have breakfast in bed."

Edith protested. "Ada with a tray on those stairs?"

"Do her good," said Mr. Baldwin lightly. He climbed gingerly out of bed and put on his slippers and dressing-gown. He paused at the door.

"I'm glad we're feeling stiff, Edie. It shows we didn't dream what happened yesterday."

"You're still keen?"

"Keen? Don't be silly!"

She heard the rusty pop of the geyser and lay back thoughtfully in bed: she knew that she ought to be relieved and delighted at his buoyant mood—but the very ease and casualness of his confidence disturbed her a little: she would have felt happier if he had awakened with some tough problem to grapple with but he seemed to have swept all problems aside. She wished with all her heart that she could feel as he did—but to her it was still too easy—too magnificent to be free from hidden danger.

He returned with the Sunday paper and climbed back into bed more easily than he got out.

"Healthy stiffness soon wears off," he said. "We'll have an easy morning and get down to things in the afternoon."

"What did Ada say?"

Mr. Baldwin laughed. "Not much. Too surprised. We've got bigger things to face than Ada now." He began to turn the paper and suddenly sat up in excitement.

"Look here!—a whole page advertising new Estates! Funny we've never noticed this before."

Edith had vaguely glanced at the Estate page on many a Sunday morning and passed it without a thought. It was now as fascinating as in the past it had been dull. The broad page was filled with announcements of different shapes and sizes: Estates jostled each other and pushed their attractions eagerly and frantically before the reader's eye.

The Meadow Hall Estate was exquisitely situated in a centuries old garden: the Pitbury Hill Estate offered a glorious view over three of nature's most favored Counties: The Chawley Down Estate invited one to enjoy a breeze that blew one's cares away: a lovely reach of the noble Thames was



at one's feet for 18/7 weekly: "£10 down and no legal charges."

A deposit of 15 secured possession of a house to be proud of. Houses at £699 sounded suspiciously more expensive than those at £700; there were solitary aristocrats standing amidst pines at 11875 but nothing in the final opinion of Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin, to rival the Show House in Welken Valley.

It was good to have before them every kind of alternative and slowly whittle them away until their valley remained supreme. The banks of the Thames meant dampness and fog—the Downs would rattle windows too boisterously and keep one awake; a house in a centuries old garden offered no crisp virgin soil to break and tame.

"It's all right," he said, "all these are nice—but there's nothing quite so good." He laid the paper down and gazed at the ceiling with his hands behind his head.

When Edith returned from her bath the breakfast tray lay on the bed and Mr. Baldwin was industriously at work with a writing pad.

"Young Mr. Morrison's going to have a pleasant surprise in the morning," he said.

"Who's Mr. Morrison?"  
He began to tease her. "Ronald Morrison!—you know Mr. Ronald Morrison!"

"I've never heard of him," said Edith.

"But you said you liked him?"  
"What are you talking about?" she began, and then she said: "Oh!" and laughed. He was holding up a card which she recognised as the one their young friend in the valley had given them the night before. "Oh—! Is that his name?" Ronald Morrison! She took the card and read with interest.

MR. RONALD MORRISON  
Welken Valley Estate,  
Welken.

Middlesex. Phone: Welken 891

"How does this sound?" said Mr. Baldwin. He picked up the sheet of paper and began to read.

"Dear Mr. Morrison.—When we met you yesterday we had no intention whatever of buying a new house. Thanks, however, to the interesting manner in which you explained your Estate, we are persuaded that subject to the satisfactory arrangement of terms, we should like you to build us a nice house somewhat after the style of the one you showed us.

"We are free on Wednesday afternoon and shall be pleased to meet you upon the Estate at 3 p.m. to discuss the matter further.

"Yours sincerely, etc."

"That's awfully nice," said Edith.

"No harm in giving the boy a lift up. He'll naturally show it to his boss and he ought to do him a lot of good. Some people would write a formal business letter direct to the Estate, but it's the personal touch I like. You'll find that boy'll be useful to us over lots of little things."

"Can't you picture his face when he reads it?" said Edith, as she carefully sat up and poured out the tea. "His hair'll flop over his face and he'll probably start snoring."

"He'll probably get married on the strength of it!"  
"I hope he does," said Edith. "Mind how you eat that egg!"

They stayed in bed for an hour after breakfast and calculated how much they would get for the bedroom furniture. They agreed it conservatively at six, although Mr. Baldwin thought the tallboy in the corner, which came from his father's house in Colchester, was probably an antique and might fetch almost anything. "You never know," he said.

A shroud of steel grey, motionless

for wrapped Brondesbury Terrace when they drew the curtains. Towards midday the sun appeared; a flavorless pink pall that groped for an hour then packed up in despair and moved on to more responsive lands. But the weather mattered little to the Baldwins now. After lunch they went all over the house making an inventory of the furniture and placing estimated values against everything. It reached the satisfactory figure of £400.

"If all goes well," said Mr. Baldwin, "we shall scarcely have to touch those Debentures of yours."

They had both secretly feared that the old house might hold a subtle power to shame their light-hearted plans. Once or twice, as they went from room to room, some little, unexpected thing would stir a memory and arouse a pang, but as the day drew on the old place slowly released its feeble grip and by the evening it scarcely seemed their home any longer. As they drew the curtains and turned on the lamp they felt as if they were settled for a night's lodging in some old Harbor-side hotel; that a ship nearby was waiting for the morning, when it would take them aboard and sail for mystic far-off lands.

Mr. Baldwin made a copy of his letter to the young man of Welken Valley and went down to catch the early evening post to ensure its delivery in the morning. He added a short postscript.

"P.S. Perhaps you would see if you can arrange a piece of land for us that includes one of the big elm trees that are such a pleasant feature of Welken Valley."

"Tomorrow morning we start in earnest," he said when he got back. "First of all we must go to an Estate Agent about selling this house." He threw himself into an armchair by the fire.

"By Jove! I'm stiffer than I thought!"

"We oughtn't to have walked so far," said Edith.

Mr. Baldwin sat up and stared at her across the fire.

"Supposing we hadn't!—supposing we'd turned back before we got to the crest of the hill?—and had never seen the valley—and those houses?"

"I wonder," murmured Edith.

THE offices of Timbrell & Dove, Auctioneers and Estate Agents, were situated in Station Approach. Mr. Baldwin had passed the place thousands of times on his way to catch his train, but nothing until now had given him reason to go inside.

His first view of the interior was a little disappointing; he had pictured a spacious office bustling with officials managing estates and people buying and selling houses; he discovered a small dingy room; half office, half shop, and nobody to be seen.

But voices came from an inner room, and presently a pale, weedy young man appeared and looked at Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin in surprise. It was obvious at a glance that he was neither Timbrell nor Dove.

"Yes, sir?"  
Mr. Baldwin approached the counter. "We want to sell a house," he announced.

The fluster he had expected failed to materialise; whatever interest the young man shown immediately disappeared. He picked up a grubby piece of paper, handed it to Mr. Baldwin, nodded stiffly towards a rickety little table in a corner and said: "Fill in this form, please."

Mr. Baldwin was so surprised that he felt it was up to him to do something unexpected, but as nothing occurred to him he took the form and sat down. It was an insult to his house and an insult to him to have the matter treated as if he were registering for a housemaid.

What he had expected he could not perhaps explain; vaguely he had hoped to find kindred spirits in this office who would enter into his own enthusiasm about it all; keen business men who would jump at the prospect of selling a sound, well built house so near the station, shops and Park, who would applaud the bold step that he and his wife were taking.

Their visit to the Estate Agent was the first move into the open; Sunday had been packed with secret discussions; they had worked until midnight in a fever heat of suppressed excitement, and it was depressing that the first outside person to know about it should be this insipid young man.

It occurred to Mr. Baldwin that he should have asked at once to see one of the partners, but that was too late now. He drew the form towards him and picked up the pen he was expected to use. The nib was so bloated with clogged ink that it looked more like a prune than a writing instrument. He drew out his fountain pen and began:

Address of Property:  
Grammere, 14 Brondesbury Terrace.  
Freehold or Leasehold: Freehold  
Sitting Rooms: 2  
Bedrooms: 4  
Bathroom: Yes.  
Garage: No.  
Telephone: No.

It was a little disturbing to sit at this drab rickety table and fill in poor old "Grammere's" death warrant; he had an uncomfortable feeling that he was playing the old house a dirty trick behind its back. It was waiting for them to return, patiently and trustfully, like an old, devoted dog that they were planning to have destroyed.

The form itself was so unattractive that "Grammere" seemed to shrivel up and decay as he filled up the bare, commonplace particulars. "Sitting rooms: 2" was a travesty of fact; he wanted to add: "large folding doors between drawing and dining-room opening upon wrought-iron balcony and steps to spacious garden," but something told him that it would mean nothing to the dreary minds of Timbrell & Dove.

He left blank the space after "Price demanded" because it looked like a trap. He rose and pushed the form across to the waiting clerk, who glanced at it, blotted it and disappeared with it into the back room.

Mr. Baldwin winked at Edith to show that he was feeling all right about everything; but inwardly he had never felt less like winking. Until this moment he had not doubted that a ready and eager purchaser would appear. The difficulty had not been connected with the selling; it had been in the mustering of courage to burn their boats and sell.

They had done that triumphantly; they had left home upon the wings of adventure, determined not to hesitate or falter and now something in this drab, cheerless office had made him feel horribly different about it all.

Supposing nobody would buy "Grammere"—that would mean... As he stood waiting, he watched the heads of passers-by. They did not glance at the office; none of them looked as if they would dream



of buying "Grasmere".

"Would you come through, please?" The clerk was standing at the inner door. Mr. Baldwin made way for Edith with an encouraging smile, but a heavy, anxious heart.

"Good morning!" said a fat man with a large tobacco-stained moustache. "Sit down, madam. Sit down, sir."

It was a small office, smothered, like the rest of the place with large, flimsy notices. How it would burn, thought Edith.

The fat man sat down at his desk and pushed aside some papers to make room for Mr. Baldwin's form.

"Grasmere—Brondebury Terrace," he read. (He might, thought Mr. Baldwin, have added: "Of course—I know the house.")

"We are moving into the country," said Mr. Baldwin.

The Estate Agent looked up in sudden interest.

"The country! Have you decided upon the district? We represent several very charming new Estates—no doubt we—"

"That's all decided," said Mr. Baldwin, somewhat irritated, and he noticed a distinct cooling off in the fat man's interest.

"Quite. I only mentioned it because we have special facilities for purchase, etc. When—er—do you wish to move?"

"Not until our new house is ready, of course."

"Is it near completion?"

"It isn't started yet."

"Oh. That means at least six months. It'll give us more chance of doing something with this."

He raised the form containing the particulars of "Grasmere" as though it were contaminated.

"I'm afraid there's not much demand for houses in Brondebury Terrace."

"No demand!" exclaimed Mr. Baldwin—"there hasn't been a house for sale there all this year!"

The Estate Agent looked at him with a weary smile.

"Quite. But you know, some people object to notices being stuck up."

Mr. Baldwin felt cold, and slightly sick. The egg he had eaten so hastily for breakfast in his hurry to call at this dreary place had formed into a hard lump in his stomach. "Some people object to notices being stuck up," that meant presumably that everybody in Brondebury Terrace was secretly and hopelessly trying to sell their house.

The man had a genius for stirring up annoyance: he sat back, stuck his thumbs into his waistcoat and said: "Basement?"

"All the houses round here have got basements," snapped Mr. Baldwin.

"That's the trouble," replied the fat man. "Basements are the curse of our business." He peered at the form and added: "No garage, I see."

"Grasmere's near the station—five minutes from the shops and Park—"

"Oh, I know—but, you see—it's the wrong side of the station: it's not a district people are looking for in these days."

Mr. Baldwin curiously rose and Edith looked up in surprise. His face was pinched and pale, and his hand was quivering as he reached for his hat. He was staring over the Estate Agent's head—through the bleak uncurtained window that faced the Railway. But there was a halting dignity about the way he said: "You mean you would prefer not to act as our agent?"

This time the man behind the desk

looked surprised. There was a little note of respect when he answered.

"Not at all, sir! I shall be delighted to act for you. Only you know sir—I find my clients frequently think it's easier to sell than to—er—"

"Buy?" enquired Mr. Baldwin.

The man laughed. "You've got it, sir!"

"Of course I realise there's not a queue of people waiting outside to buy my house."

The Estate Agent laughed again. He pulled out a tarnished case, straightened the cigarettes in it with a fat, stained finger and offered it to Mr. Baldwin.

"I'm sorry if I gave you the wrong impression, sir. I don't often fail to sell when I get busy on a house. I only wanted you not to expect anything too—er—exceptional. Let me come up and see it. Will you be in at"—he opened an appointment book and quickly covered the blank page with his hand—"three o'clock? Very good, sir."

"And, by the way," said Mr. Baldwin at the door—"we intend to sell all our present furniture and buy everything completely new for our new house. I shall want to auction it."

"Certainly, sir. Thank you! My partner, Mr. Dove, attends to valuations; he's away today, but I'll ask him to make an inventory. Good morning, sir. Good morning, madam. Three o'clock then."

"I didn't like him at first," said Mr. Baldwin when they were outside.

"I don't like him much now," replied Edith. She had not said a word during the interview, but she had seen a good deal. "I think we might do better. Tom. There's a much nicer looking place in the High Street."

"Give him a trial," said Mr. Baldwin. "After all, he's on the spot. He'll give us more personal attention than you'd get from a big place."

They turned into Brondebury Terrace and walked down towards their house. Both were wondering, as they returned, whether half-burned boats could ever be patched and launched again if the worst came to the worst.

MR. TIMBRELL turned up promptly at three o'clock and seemed much more interested in the furniture than in the house. He took the house in at a glance—as much as to say—"I know the type"—but he spent a long time in the drawing-room examining the furniture and china in the bureau.

Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin showed him everything: pointing out good features and stressing the fact that a good deal came from old country houses.

"Yes," said the Estate Agent—then "Yes," again. He looked thoughtful and interested, and Mr. Baldwin's spirits began to rise. It looked as if the man had spotted something really good. "You're going to sell everything?"

"Everything," chorused Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin.

Mr. Timbrell nodded approval. "It's an original idea: an excellent one if you ask me. You ought to see the old junk some people cart about with them."

The last remark detracted a little from the first. There was an unpleasant flavor about "old junk" that Mr. Baldwin did not like.

"Now, sir!" said Mr. Timbrell, drawing up a chair to the table. It would be the one with the split leather, thought Edith, and the man would naturally put his fingers into the grey, dirty-looking stuffing.

"Now, sir. The house. We ought

to agree upon a limit price. You can depend upon me to get the highest figure, of course, but we must fix a limit."

Mr. Baldwin's heart began to thump. The time for pleasant speculation was over and they were to face hard facts at last.

"I paid £750 originally and I've made a good many improvements since then, of course." He kept his eyes from the ceiling, where above the electric light bowl lay the brown tinge from the gas-lit days. "I imagine all property has risen in value a good deal over the last twenty years or so. It's freehold, of course, and not mortgaged in any way."

"Quite," said the Agent. He sat silent for a while, drumming the table with his fingers. A greasy bowler hat lay beside him and his open overcoat hung almost to the floor. Mr. Baldwin watched him steadily, and suddenly remembered another point.

"I'm certain there's never anything empty in this road: people never seem to go."

Mr. Timbrell glanced up quickly. "Quite. I know—but—but you see, they're mostly the kind of people who—who stay—if you know what I mean—"

"Because it's a good neighborhood," suggested Mr. Baldwin with a smile.

"I didn't mean it like that," put in the Estate Agent. "Don't think I'm trying to run the house down: it's sound enough—but it's old-fashioned: that basement kitchen, you know—"

"Our servant never complains," said Edith—but Mr. Timbrell appeared not to hear.

"It's a wrong impression to believe that house property of this kind has risen in value—the trouble is that such a lot of new houses are going up nowadays and people naturally go for modern places."

Mr. Baldwin felt his irritation rising again. They had been through all this once.

"Well," he said, "what price are we going to fix?"

Mr. Timbrell drummed with his fingers again.

"We shall be very lucky if we get the price you paid."

"The—the price—I paid?... £750?"

The man nodded, and there was a grim finality in his nod.

"But, my dear sir, you're—you're not serious? I paid £750 before the war—when a sovereign was made of gold. I consider it worth at least £900 now."

"But, think, Mr. Baldwin—why should we get more? You've had years of wear and tear out of the place! You wouldn't expect to sell a suit of clothes for the price you gave for it, would you?"

"That's different."

"Wear and tear's the same with everything, though: there's a going out of fashion. I assure you, Mr. Baldwin, I've been an Estate Agent for twenty-five years..."

Mr. Baldwin glanced up. His eagerness had gone: he looked tired and listless.

"We—we must consider it," he said in a low voice. "We—we didn't realise..."

At the door he remembered something that had been tremendously important a little while ago, the furniture—what would you think we ought to—er?"

"I'd put it round about £90," said the Estate Agent, "but I'll send Mr. Dove to make an inventory. Then you'll let me know, sir? Good day. Good day, madam."

That evening Mr. Baldwin drew up a little statement, and Edith and he



sat looking at it in silence for a long time.

	DEBIT	£ s d
New house .. .. .	1175 0 0	
Additional fittings, say .. .. .	50 0 0	
New Furniture .. .. .	400 0 0	
Extras unprovided for, say .. .. .	25 0 0	
	1650 0 0	

	CREDIT	£ s d
Old house .. .. .	750 0 0	
Sale of Furniture .. .. .	90 0 0	
In Bank .. .. .	200 0 0	
Post Office .. .. .	18 15 0	
Edith's Debentures .. .. .	400 0 0	
	1458 15 0	

A house proudly valued at £1000 battered by an expert to £750: its furniture carefully calculated to £400 shrunk to a fantastic £200: every penny of the reserve Debentures swallowed up and a crushing debt of £200 remaining with no earthly prospect of repayment.

Mr. Baldwin lay in bed, weary and heavy-eyed from a sleepless night, wrapped in the misery of his return from a fool's paradise. A move to Welden Valley would carry the torments of financial suicide that none but a lunatic would bring upon himself. He should have known from the beginning that it was too good and easy-looking to be true; that the heaven track, with all its dullness, remained the only secure path for the man no longer young.

He should have known the ominous reason for the lack of footprints upon tall green grass and glistening, undraining sands. If it were easy to slip out of one's threadbare envelope of existence then every dreary road within call of London would be a desert of empty houses.

A year ago he had thought that he alone of all the thousands who retired had found the secret door to a new life: he had wondered why others had never used it, and as the months passed he found out why. It needed younger, stronger arms than those of a man of sixty to lift the latch.

Now—a year later, when another door had revealed itself and enticed him to its entrance, a single day had proved it too narrow for the lorry load of cares that follow a man in middle age.

The crushing little statement of figures, with a pencil beside it, lay on the bedside table. He had brought it to bed with him in the fruitless hope that some revelation might come in the night. He picked it up and lay staring at it in the curbed dimness of the autumn morning; he added it up again and put it aside.

Forty years in a profession that glutted itself upon caution had taught him one thing at least: that figures, to be properly digested, must be taken cold and raw. He was a fool who tried to boil them into different shape and dry them before a radiant imagination. As he climbed into bed at the end of the dreary Monday of disillusionment, Edith had turned with a wan smile and said: "Whatever happens—nobody can say we haven't tried."

He heard the gate squeak, and the heavy clump of the postman up the steps. It should have set his heart thudding with anticipation but it meant nothing now.

Two letters came up when Ada brought the morning tea: both bore Welden postmarks—one was addressed in typescript, the other on private paper in a round schoolboyish hand.

WELDEN VALLEY ESTATES LTD.  
Directors Welden,  
W. N. Turnbull Middlesex  
R. Sovrett  
T. S. Soherby 24th October, 1934

"Dear Sir.—We beg to acknowledge with thanks receipt of your letter of the 22nd inst., addressed to our Mr. Morrison.

"We are very pleased to learn of your desire to have us build you a house on our new Estate. One or two very delightful positions remain available and our Manager, Mr. Watkinson, will meet you at our Estate Office on Wednesday afternoon at 3 p.m.

"A car will be waiting for you at Welden Station and a convenient train is that arriving at 2.48 p.m."

The other, in the round, boyish hand:

"Dear Mr. Baldwin,—I don't suppose it's the proper thing to write like this, but I really must tell you how grateful and delighted I was to get your charming letter. You can't think what it means to me. It's my first big success, and . . ."

WITHOUT reading any further, Mr. Baldwin lowered the letter to the crumpled counterpane. A hot-smarting mist had filled his eyes. Poor boy—his first big success—his first big disillusionment. Facts that they were to have written and sent these youthful hopes bounding before they had made certain that the move could be made.

What could he write in reply?—altered plans?—a weak lie about postponement? Whatever he wrote and whatever he did the boy would remember him as one of the type that fed a cheap vanity upon deference extracted by big talk and false promises.

He picked up the typewritten letter and glanced at it again: "one or two delightful positions are still available." Through the mist he saw the span of meadowland: turf rolled up and set aside: the outline of a house drawn in broad strips of naked soil: walls rising: window-frames settling in place: dark flies and chimneys and the first shy wisps of smoke. Welden Valley would spring to life and soften to maturity and they would not be there.

Edith was sipping her tea. She had seen the letters but had not asked to read them. But to her at least an idea had come during the night. "Tom. What about all the money you've paid into the Life Insurance? Couldn't you borrow that?"

He shook his head. If anything were to happen to him there would be just enough from the insurance, together with her widow's pension, to keep them from need.

"No, Edie. We can't touch that."

But even as he spoke an inspiration jerked him up in bed.

He often wondered afterwards why the idea had not come to him before: why he should have spent a day of misery with the way out staring him clearly in the face. Probably because the word "mortgage" was a funeral way of saying "loan" because a loan meant financial failure—moral collapse and every other disturbing thing that his laborious but honorable creed had stiffly turned its back upon. When he had left home to come to London, his father had given him a piece of valuable advice: "Never borrow—and never lend."

It was particularly good advice in Mr. Baldwin's case, because while he had never had any cause to borrow,

men in the office had frequently invited him to lend.

But he had no false ideas about these things: to live within one's income without a call upon one's self restraint was nothing to be proud of. It showed, on the contrary, an anaemic grip of life.

All the really attractive and vigorous men he had known were chronically in want of money and usually in debt and he admired them because their embarrassment came from vigor, imagination and a fierce desire for the things that money could buy.

He admired them because they showed contempt for the things he feared: money-lenders—sleepless nights and the losing of his job. To raise a mortgage upon his house to cover overspending in other directions would have been, in his eyes, the first step to a midnight nest on the Thames Embankment. But several old shibboleths had gone overboard in this memorable week-end and suddenly the one about mortgages went over with a smooth slip and scarcely a struggle.

It was no longer an ominous word of failure. To raise a mortgage of £200 on a house worth £400 more than "Grasmere" was a step forward rather than a step back and the word took upon itself a sweet sounding note of honorable rescue. He swallowed a mouthful of tea and said to Edith:

"What would you think if I were to say that whatever we have to do—whatever risks we have to take—we shall have that house in Welden Valley?"

Two round eyes looked at him over the tea cup: the alp that Edith was on the point of taking was indefinitely postponed, and in fact never taken. Half-an-hour later Ada discovered a half cup of cold, forgotten tea upon the dressing-table.

"I'd say," said Edith, "that whatever it means—whatever we have to do—even if I have to go out and do dressmaking—I'm with you, Tom."

He felt quite moved and had to recover himself before he began to explain.

"You see, dear, a mortgage doesn't mean you've really borrowed money. It simply means we exchange a small part of the house for what we need to save for it."

Edith did not quite understand—nor did Mr. Baldwin, exactly—and he tried to make it clearer.

"If you were to borrow money and spend it on a holiday that you can't afford—then that's different altogether, because you've spent the holiday and the money. All we do is to sell a house worth £750 and get one worth £1175—we are £425 better off but £200 worth of the new house still belongs to the Estate. We are £225 to the good, you see. The little piece of the house that belongs to the Estate is always there, we haven't spent it and we gradually pay it back until one day the whole house is ours."

"We pay £10 a year interest, but we save that by growing our own vegetables. We'll easily do it, Edie. We shan't want to spend much on ourselves in the new house because it'll be fine just to live in and work in. So it's all right, Edie—it's absolutely all right after all."

And Edith, in her joy, did an embarrassing thing. She pressed his hand, quickly kissed him, and said: "Bravo!" She used to do things like that when they were young, and it had always made him feel a bit awkward. It made him wriggle somewhat hastily out of bed, but he was too happy to feel irritated.

He understood how Edith was feeling: he could have run all over the house shouting, "Bravo!" himself, at



the top of his voice. The dark clouds of failure that had closed upon them the previous evening had lifted now without possibility of return, and their lifting had set the fires of excitement blazing more fiercely than before.

They knew the worst and they knew that the worst could not stop them: If "Grasmere" only sold for £600 instead of £750, they could still go on. It would only mean an extra £150 mortgage—£7/10/0 a year in extra interest. Edith had inspired him more than she knew when she had said that about dressmaking; he would do anything; go out gardening—address envelopes at a shilling a thousand—anything would be for with the house in Welden Valley.

Plans they had made for the day and sadly set aside sprang to life again; they had arranged to go to London, to call the Bank and arrange about Edith's Debentures, and spend the afternoon at a big furniture store in the West End. In the course of a hurried shave Mr. Baldwin decided that while he was in the City he would pay a visit to the old office.

He had not been near the office since his retirement; he had shrunk from joining the ranks of the decrepit old dodderers who went in to waste the time and patience of the active staff. But he could go with a purpose now, and chuckled at the surprise he would give them all.

They called at the Estate Office on their way to the station and told Mr. Timbrell to go ahead as quickly as possible with the sale of "Grasmere." Mr. Timbrell looked as if he had not expected to see the Baldwins again and was both pleased and surprised to receive such prompt instructions. He promised to get busy at once and the Baldwins said they had no objection whatever to a "FOR SALE" board being put up in their front garden.

Mr. Timbrell introduced them to Mr. Dove, his partner, who was to value their furniture for the auction. Mr. Dove was inclined to be patronising, and after reference to his engagement book informed them that he would call at three o'clock that afternoon.

But Mr. Baldwin shook his head. "I'm sorry—we're absolutely full up all day—we haven't a moment."

Mr. Dove suggested Wednesday. "I'm afraid Wednesday's no good either. We've got an important engagement in the country."

It was clear that he was building up a good impression, and after a discussion, Saturday morning at ten o'clock was settled.

It was pleasant to walk the old City streets again; to see the old familiar places with Edith on his arm. The Bank Manager was polite but obviously surprised. He was very pleased to meet a lady whose Debentures he had protected for so many years. They were no longer called "London Chatham & Dover Debentures," owing to the big Railway Merger, but they were just as good—if not better. Yes, certainly; they could be sold at any time.

He consulted the "Financial Times" and stated that the Debentures stood slightly over par, at 102½. That meant that after deducting brokerage they would receive a clear £400, and as Mr. Baldwin heard this he gave a sigh of relief. The tide had turned at last; at last something was worth what they had estimated.

It was arranged that the sale should be effected when the money was needed in the spring; the manager personally accompanied them to the door

and they were able to bask for an extra half minute in the flattering deference paid to Capitalists.

"Now," said Mr. Baldwin, as they stood outside, "we'll look in at the old office."

He stopped out confidently, but an overpowering shyness crept over him as he approached the familiar doors. It was going to be a big ordeal to walk in after such a long, unexplained absence. He had promised to look them up quite frequently and his failure to appear must have caused some speculation among his old friends. Had he broken up?—he was just the kind that would: the eyes of the whole staff would be upon him; upon his face, upon his clothes, upon Edith.

It was not like entering a drawing-room and being at once surrounded: the staff, during office hours, would have to remain more or less in their places and it would mean long-drawn-out, embarrassed smiles and nods to most of them across the tops of desks and around brass railings and stone columns.

His courage almost failed, and he was on the point of turning aside when Henslip, the old Messenger, in his seedy top hat and brass-buttoned tail coat, appeared, approaching the door from the other direction. Mr. Baldwin joyfully hurried forward and called out to the Messenger as he was about to go in.

"Hi, there! Henslip!—how are you?" It took the Messenger a moment or two to realise who it was, then a broad smile and a firm handshake broke the ice.

"Why, if it isn't Mr. Baldwin!—You're a nice one, sir! You promised to come and see us months ago!"

"I know, I've been so terribly busy—haven't had a moment—but here I am, and this is my wife."

"You're looking five years younger than when you left, sir!"

"And I feel ten years younger," beamed Mr. Baldwin in reply. "I want to see Mr. Wilson. Take me in, Henslip. I'm feeling shy!"

**M**RS. BALDWIN'S entrance was impressive, beyond all his expectations; he made his way down the broad marble-flagged aisle in earnest conversation with Henslip, glancing up now and then to wave friendly but brief acknowledgment to his old friends.

He caught sight of several new, boyish faces as he went along, but in all other respects everything was absurdly the same—except perhaps, the little glassed-in cubicle where he had spent his last years of active service. That somehow looked remote and strange.

Wilson, the Manager, looked absurdly the same, too. He might easily have just sat down after delivering his speech and handing Mr. Baldwin the clock. Mr. Baldwin half expected to see the shavings from the parcel still lying on the desk.

"Well, this is a surprise! We thought we were never going to see you again! How do you do, Mrs. Baldwin. Sit down."

He produced a box of cigarettes, and Mr. Baldwin felt agreeably surprised and happy. He realised what a very wise thing it was to be elusive, and to make rare appearances.

"You're looking extremely well, Baldwin."

"I feel it."

"Enjoying yourself?"

"I'm enjoying every minute of it. There's so much to do, you see. And now we're just going to start building a new house in the country. You

can realise what that means: new furniture—new everything."

He had meant to keep this back for a bit, but he could not resist letting off all his artillery at once. Wilson, a younger man, had passed over his head to the Managership and had never been able to conceal a little touch of tolerance that Mr. Baldwin had resented. It was a pleasant experience to sit back balancing his hat on his umbrella handle, puffing Wilson's cigarette and telling him about his new house.

"We're going this afternoon to see about furnishing."

Wilson looked at him incredulously. "Why—have you—have you had some luck, or something?"

Mr. Baldwin enjoyed a silent chuckle and shot a furtive wink at Edith. How true to type this fellow was! He took it for granted that a retired Insurance Clerk should potter out the rest of his days in obscurity, thinking in humble little ways, doing humble little things—choking his little pension in humble gratitude and warming his toes gratefully beside his humble little fire.

"Luck?" he said. "No. No special luck. We just happen to be tired of the old house, so we're selling it and buying a new one, that's all. We're tired of our old furniture, so we're selling that, too, and buying new, modern stuff. We're going to rather a delightful spot in Welden Valley, beyond Stanmore. After all the whole point of retiring is to get out of the rut and start afresh. Isn't it?"

Mr. Wilson gave it up. It beat him. Baldwin of all people. He shifted a little in his chair, for he was feeling vaguely irritated. Baldwin's eyes were upon him with a clear, amused steadiness; Baldwin reached forward and casually flicked his cigarette ash into the waste-paper basket. He was behaving like an important client when he should behave diffidently and gratefully like the retired clerk he was.

He ought to be sitting with awkward embarrassment, not knowing what to do with the long grey ash on his cigarette and dreading lest it fell on the Managerial carpet until he, the manager, lightly pushed forward the ashtray on his desk to the accompaniment of grateful thanks. He felt irritated.

"I just came along to say I'd like to insure the new house in the old office: I'll drop a line and tell you when it's ready. It'll be for £1175—probably £1250 with fittings, and £400 on furniture."

"And a luxury car?" Inquired Mr. Wilson with a hint of malice.

"Not yet," smiled Mr. Baldwin. "I'll try and get the new owner of 'Grasmere' to keep the insurance of it in the old office, too."

"Splendid!" said Mr. Wilson, without much conviction. He turned to Mrs. Baldwin with a gracious smile.

"I expect you're enjoying the excitement, Mrs. Baldwin?"

"Very much, thank you," said Edith. That was better. She was timid in any case, she was a retired clerk's wife, even if the husband were a bit above himself. "I wish I could ask you to lunch with me, but I'm lunching with Mr. Addison Cotter, who's just back from America. You remember the Addison Cotter Estate, Baldwin?"

Mr. Baldwin certainly did. An awe-inspiring list of properties that filled six ledger pages. He had a feeling that the Addison Cotter Estate had been fired at him in retaliation.

"Well," said the manager, "come in and see us again. I'm glad to see



you looking so well. Goodbye, Mrs. Baldwin."

Edith went out and sat on the leather seat beneath the window while Mr. Baldwin strolled round to shake a number of hands in the main office. She heard the words "Welden Valley" several times, and each time she heard it the sound of larks and the sigh of the wind seemed to rise above the dull roar of the City traffic. She heard someone say, "Are you going to keep a cow?" and she saw Tom join heartily in the laughter.

How different he looked—what a miracle had been wrought in the past four days!—only four days! She had swelled with pride in the Manager's office. Tom looked ten years the younger of the two—bright-eyed—healthy checked—keen and alert—nicely dressed—a country gentleman. The Manager had looked tired and dusty—there were dark shadows under his eyes.

She was thinking of the wonderful change in her husband; she had no mirror to reveal how she too had changed. She only knew that never in her life, until this moment, had she felt the happiness and excitement that life was ready to give to those who did not fear its shadows and uncertainties.

It was chance rather than design that carried them home in the very train that Mr. Baldwin used to catch on his homeward journey in his office days, and chance that placed Mr. Baldwin in the same corner that had been his on the night when the clock in its parcel lay above his head.

It was a queer, uncanny experience to look round the crowded carriage and see once again the kind of people he had known so well—two girls deep in library books—an office lad with a paper-backed thriller—men with piped and newspapers—a youth with a textbook and a man with nothing to read but a whisky advertisement on the panel opposite him.

The same atmosphere: the same rattle: the same electric signs. Mr. Baldwin sat thinking of his last journey, a year ago but as clear as yesterday. He thought with a sad wistfulness of the fantastic plans that had carried him home on the last evening of his working days—how futile and unsubstantial they had been; how splendidly real were the things that lay ahead this time.

He leant forward, touched Edith on the knee, and whispered through the rattle of the train: "Tomorrow we go to Welden Valley and pick our piece of land."

Edith leant back again, nodded several times, and smiled.

The trees were waving excited branches over the lane that led from Welden Village to the station; they tossed up little handfuls of russet leaves and bent over the road to watch them fall.

They grew much too near the road, thought the chauffeur of a large saloon car. One day one of those enormous alms would lose its balance and turn a good car into a heap of scrap and a good chauffeur into pulp. They seemed to grow straight out of the farmyards a mere yard or two from the low grey walls that girded the lane.

The chauffeur was a sensitive man, and each time a great gust boomed overhead he thought he could hear giant branches cracking and ducked towards the driving wheel of his car. It sounded like the sea. An eddy of leaves smacked the windows, chased each other round the base of the car and followed like demented boys. A lovely day, a clean October sky:

a clear-cut landscape and a smell of wood smoke and pigs. It was certainly rural, this Welden Valley. For himself he preferred the Hampstead Estate that the Governor had just finished. You could see the whole of London from there and you could be in the heart of it in twenty minutes. Down here in Welden Valley you felt like a beetle in a basin.

There was time for a cigarette before the 248 arrived; he pulled up in the station yard and smoked inside the car, for the wind outside gave him a headache and red eyelids.

It was quiet enough for anybody down here; a man breaking coal on a truck in a siding seemed to begin and complete the whole sum of human endeavor. A solitary porter appeared and gazed up the line as though somebody had told him a train was coming and he thought he was having his leg pulled.

"STILL, the chauffeur reflected, the Governor would make things up a bit. Five hundred houses he talked about building—each on its own land and separated from the others, and when the Governor planned a thing he usually completed it. He glanced back at the sleepy village and wondered how it would take the strain. A funny man, the Governor; he really did seem to try to make his estates worth living in; he gave up good bits of his land simply to turn into green verges; and what he called "closes."

He climbed out of the car, opened the windows to let the smoke out, and stood by the barrier as the train came in. Doors crept furtively open and pale hands held them an inch apart until the brakes had squeaked into silence.

Only about half a dozen people got out: a workman—a schoolgirl—a traveler with a bag of samples; the chauffeur's practised eye quickly singled out his quarry—he could not mistake them as they climbed out of the middle of the train. An alert, slightly built man of about fifty—looked like a solicitor—grey hair—jaunty tweed cap, grey flannel trousers, and immaculate brown shoes. Plenty of money, decided the chauffeur.

He carried a burnberry and a stout walking-stick; obviously a town gentleman out for a country house; he had all the symptoms, even to the way he carried his burnberry carelessly over one shoulder.

The lady had lost something; she was fumbling hastily with her bag and umbrella; a plump, pleasant, little lady with grey hair and a brown coat and skirt; she was searching the platform rather short-sightedly. The husband darted forward just in time to retrieve a small suede glove that was on the point of beginning a precarious journey to St. Albans on the footboard of the train.

The chauffeur saluted. "Mr. Baldwin, sir?"

"Yes. That's right."

"I've come to drive you to the estate, Mr."

A few minutes later Mr. Baldwin said, "This is business efficiency and no mistake!"

"It is, indeed," murmured Edith.

She turned in her deep, bouncing, leather seat, put her arm through the leather seat, and peered up at the trees as they waved their boisterous welcome. "Isn't it lovely!"

Mr. Baldwin was pretending as hard as possible that he was not entirely a stranger to luxurious limousines. He was also thinking a little uneasily that the Welden Valley Estates Ltd. must make quite a good profit out of their houses to afford this sort of thing.

"D'you realise," said Edith, "that this is the first time we've seen Welden Valley in broad daylight? It's always been dark by the time we've had tea and come along here to the station."

"Yes. Funny isn't it?" Mr. Baldwin would have preferred the new estate to have come upon them gradually in a leisurely walk from the station; he would have enjoyed drawing out this period of anticipation.

He looked through the window at the village that was soon to be their home—at an old brown church lying back among the trees, at a snug village street to stroll along in pipe-lit ease on summer nights—meadow paths and wild flowers—a square of amber light in the valley beckoning him home.

A little way ahead, hidden for the moment by the old houses of the main street, lay a green, unsuspecting square of land—unaware of those who were swiftly approaching it, who were soon to claim it and begin to tame its wild, virgin heart. Mr. Baldwin lay back in the car and thought to himself, "This is a moment that'll never come again—hold it tight and keep its memory."

The car swung to the left in the centre of the village, up the lane that used to end their footpath from Stanmore. But now, where the lane used to fade into the heathland, the new road began, and presently they were swaying slowly and gently along a broad ribbon of billowy clay.

The ride was over. They stopped beside a neat little estate office that might have been built from an expensive box of toy bricks.

"Here we are, sir," said the chauffeur, jumping down and opening the door. "Lovely day."

"Beautiful," said Mr. Baldwin, bumping his head on the roof of the car. "Thank you."

"The wind's dried everything up nicely," added the man as he took Mrs. Baldwin politely by the arm and helped her out.

The Baldwins had no precise idea of what the manager of a select but not an estate should look like. If a large, weather-beaten man in Scotch tweeds had appeared they would probably have said afterwards: "Exactly what we thought."

But Mr. Watkinson was a surprise. They would not have come near him in a dozen guesses. He was short and square, with a smooth, pink face and little polished red patches on his cheeks; a bald, pear-shaped head and a little pointed beard—rather like Shakespeare. His dress seemed quite unsuitable to his profession for he wore a large butterfly collar, a dark suit, and pointed, black shoes.

But, after all, thought Mr. Baldwin, he was a business man, and most of his time was probably spent at board meetings in luxurious offices that demanded pointed, black shoes. He could not change each time he came to the estate to meet a client.

He greeted them warmly but briskly, and conducted them through the outer room to his private office. Mr. Baldwin noticed interesting maps on the wall as he passed through; a girl at a typewriter, a few small fragments of up-to-date houses piled in a corner—a glazed brick, a door-knocker—an interesting-looking bath tap. It all looked very busy and prosperous.

Mr. Watkinson wasted no time in coming to the point; he waved aside Mr. Baldwin's faltering explanation that they had not quite decided upon the exact house they needed.

"There's plenty of time to arrange that; you must have a quiet look at all these plans. What we must do first of all is to fix down a good position; you must have one of the best before they're all gone."

"Are they going?" inquired Mr.



Baldwin, pleased but a little anxious. He felt certain there would be a rush for the positions that had the big elms upon them.

"Going! We sold seven last week; twenty-nine this month; roughly one a day—and the demand's increasing. I expected it would go quickly, but I've never known anything like this!" He sat back and threw out his hands to show how helpless he had been in stemming the rush, and Mr. Baldwin was very thankful they had not delayed.

Then he noticed that Mr. Watkinson was eyeing them both—keenly and thoughtfully. Mr. Baldwin began to wish he had not dressed so smartly, as it might give a wrong impression. On the other hand, he reflected, it might be all to the good if the man over-estimated them at first. He would give them more attention and show them the best. He probably handed shabby people to assistants, who packed them away in the worst positions.

Then Mr. Watkinson suddenly appeared to make up his mind. He looked at Mr. Baldwin firmly and decisively and said: "You must build your house in Welden Close."

"Welden Close?" inquired Mr. Baldwin—guiltily, as though he ought to have known all about it.

For answer Mr. Watkinson briskly rolled out a plan, secured its corners with an inkpot and paperweight, and pointed rather dramatically to a green square towards the top of the paper.

"Here," he said.

"That looks quite nice," said Edith. "It's the only place that will really satisfy you," answered Mr. Watkinson. "You see, first of all, we have Bracklesham Avenue and Cymbeline Road—here. Well, that's very nice indeed for people prepared to live in an ordinary road, facing other houses, but the people I like are those who are not prepared to live in ordinary formal roads, and for those people I have designed Welden Close."

He pointed to the green square. "This will remain open for ever—a village green—a close—and the houses that are built round it will look out for all time upon a stretch of green turf with trees round it—upon gorse bushes—in fact, upon nature undisturbed."

Mr. Baldwin noticed that several of the positions round the Close were colored in pink.

"Are they—er—gone?"

Mr. Watkinson nodded. "I'm not showing Welden Close to everybody," he said.

Then he looked at them keenly again and added slowly and deliberately: "But if you'll allow me to be very personal—you are the right kind of people."

It was certainly rather personal, and a little embarrassing, but Mr. Baldwin knew what he meant and appreciated the point all the more when Mr. Watkinson explained.

"Why do you join any club? Not because of its name—or its age—or its reputation—but because of the kind of people you see going in and coming out. The kind of people—that's the only thing that matters."

"Quite," said Mr. Baldwin.

"And I apply that test to my estates. It may sound snobbish, but I'm a business man. The right kind of people attract more of the right kind of people. I apply that," he went on hastily, "to the whole estate; to Welden Close I apply it in the highest degree—because," he whispered confidently, "because I intend to build a house and live in Welden Close myself!"

He gave them a slow, artful smile as he rolled up the plan, and the Baldwin's laughed. It was beginning to sound a bit too buttery and flattering until he had added that last very

human remark. "Now, then, come along and look for yourselves!"

They walked with Mr. Watkinson along the churned clay road; it was quite obvious that all these positions had gone for, besides three houses that were finished and the three nearing completion, there were piles of scaffolding and stacks of bricks on almost every vacant plot and men were busy cutting foundation on one.

There was a brisk tapping, a cheerful whistling, a steady, vigorous hammering—men paused with bricks in their hands to look down at them over the edges of scaffolding, and an old, spronged carpenter peered over his steel-rimmed spectacles. The whole thing looked very vigorous and successful.

"It's wonderful where all the people come from to buy their houses," said Mr. Baldwin.

**M**RS. WATKINSON smiled but did not answer; it seemed as if he had discovered a secret reservoir of homeless people somewhere and was not going to risk the chance of its whereabouts becoming known to his competitors. But Mr. Baldwin was very interested in this house-building mystery and felt that the manager of an estate was the man to solve it. He pursued the matter.

"It's not as though the population's increasing at this speed—or as if the older places were being left empty. Where do they come from?"

But Mr. Watkinson was not to be drawn. He changed the subject by pointing down the road cut at right angles. "We shall develop these roads later on; we've got fifty acres altogether."

The road they were following faded into trampled grass; ahead lay an untouched sweep of heathland, spotted with gorse bushes and clamped down with stout-girthed oaks and elms.

Mr. Watkinson paused, blew his nose, and blinked round with a dreaminess that contrasted strikingly with his brisk manner of a moment ago. Apparently the view before him conjured visions.

"There's nothing to see for the moment, of course—but you must picture the whole of this centre part as an old-world village green—the grass cut and rolled—the bushes trimmed a little—the big trees just as they are. Now follow my finger—you see those white tapes? They mark a road that will enclose the green. The houses will be fifty feet back from the road—each in its own grounds."

He paused and permitted himself a moment's rapture. "Perhaps I ought not to say it, but this will be one of the loveliest features ever embodied in a modern estate; three acres of valuable land sacrificed for the benefit of those who live around it."

No wonder Mr. Watkinson had looked dreamy. Mr. Baldwin was dreamy now—he saw it all on a summer evening, with the lazy shadows over it; children playing—dogs running for bouncing balls—the little dream houses lying blissfully back—each in its snug dominion of evergreen and flowers.

He was hardly conscious of Mr. Watkinson as he followed him across the rough grassland towards the further side—the houses down by the estate office were nothing now; they were as commonplace and as trivial as those in the dusty neighborhood of his old home.

He awoke from his daydream with a start; Edith tripped over one of the tapes, tossed her umbrella and bag into the air, and fell down. Both men ran to her assistance; she was shaken, but fortunately unhurt. Her bag had flown open and a powder-puff and eightpence were recovered from the grass.

"All right, dear?"

"Quite all right, thanks."

"I'm sorry, Mrs. Baldwin. I ought to have warned you of these tapes," said Mr. Watkinson. "We're starting the road tomorrow. It should have been started last week, but we've been delayed by the gravel."

The accident brought Mr. Watkinson back to earth and business. He unrolled the plan and supported it on his knee, and Mr. Baldwin noticed with some concern the number of positions round the Close that were painted over in pink.

"Those have gone, I assume?"

The estate manager nodded. "And these marked with pencilled crosses are being held for confirmation."

It disturbed Mr. Baldwin; there seemed very few positions available.

"Now, how would this suit you?" suggested Mr. Watkinson.

He led them across to one of the pencilled-out squares of land and tapped it with his heel to show that it was solid.

Tom and Edith stood upon it—they peered round inquiringly like two staid old ponies on a new grazing ground.

"It's very nice," said Edith; she looked up at her husband for confirmation, but his eyes were not upon the ground; he was gazing ahead.

"We should like," he said, "a place with one of those old trees on it—if that's possible."

"Certainly," said Mr. Watkinson.

A little ahead stood a great silent elm; the wind had fallen, but the old tree was secretly beckoning to them with its delicate, lacy branch tips. It seemed to say: "Come over here—I'll look after you; I'll rustle you to sleep on summer nights and roar the ghosts away in winter—I'll give you shade—I'll never change; I'll give you peace—and something that'll make your cares and troubles feel very small and trivial."

"What about that one?" said Mr. Baldwin in as calm a voice as he could muster.

The Manager gave a slow, artful smile.

"You've picked the plum; the finest site of all."

Mr. Baldwin knew that without being told. He stepped over the tapes and stood upon the only piece of land in the world that could make him happy. The wiry grass sent a thrill of understanding up his legs; he felt the iron-rooted muscles of the giant that towered above them.

"This is our place," he said. The land sloped towards its further end, and their footpath formed its limit; a great wild mass of brambles marked its frontier and a stout little May tree stood sentinel beside it. "This is our place," repeated Mr. Baldwin.

"It's the finest, as I've said," remarked the Manager. "You face due south—you see where the sun's setting—you're at a corner—away from what little traffic there'll be—you also get a much wider plot because it opens fan-shaped towards the end to fit the corner, you see?"

He pointed out the position on the



plan—and Mr. Baldwin suddenly felt faint: the plot was painted pink—it had gone! It was sold!—and that was the end. He would never be able to live in Welden Valley and see this lovely—this only spot in someone else's hand. It would drive him mad. He felt sick and suddenly angry. Why hadn't the blundering fool seen that?

"But," he stammered, "it's—its gone—it's marked in, in pink!"

Mr. Watkinson looked momentarily disconcerted, but he quickly pulled himself together.

"Oh, yes, I'm sorry. What am I thinking about?" He examined the square closely, as if for some secret mark, and then looked up reassuringly. "But I think it can be arranged. It's not definitely decided and I haven't heard from the people. It's their fault entirely for not confirming it. Besides," he added with a guilty glance round, "I want you to have it. You can have it."

And with a gesture of finality he drew out a pencil and made a triumphant tick upon the square — "It's yours!"

Mr. Baldwin suddenly became conscious of his heart: it was thudding like a sledge hammer. He was not a fool—and although he knew beyond doubt that this was the gem of the whole estate, he was beginning to feel terribly afraid that things were not going to be plain sailing. . . . this man had flattered them so obviously and lured them on: he prepared himself for the struggle of his life.

"I suppose," he began, "we could build a house like your Show House here?"

"Certainly!"

"The cost, I mean—would it be the same?"

"This land is £7 a foot."

It was as if Mr. Baldwin's hammering heart had missed the anvil and hit him in the throat; the shock passed, leaving a dull pain of weariness. At the summit of ecstasy had come a death warrant. The land, then, was extra. The boy had never told them that—he had just said: "This house is £175," and had briefly concealed the price of the land.

At £7 a foot—that would be hundreds of pounds. It was fiendish to have led him here—to have flattered his selection—then crucified him with £7 a foot.

"But surely," he began in a voice that was suddenly loud and hollow, "the Show House includes the land!"

"The Show House?—oh, yes, certainly."

His heart rose — he felt himself attacking—Mr. Watkinson was on the defence.

"Then for £1175 we could build a house on this plot exactly like the Show House?"

Mr. Watkinson began to smile, then stopped. Something in the trembling voice—in the thin, lined face and burning grey eyes stopped him smiling. He was used to hammering out these things with pitifully eager purchasers—sometimes, perhaps, he had taken advantage of the power he held, for at no time is a man more vulnerable to extravagance and recklessness than when his feet first grip a piece of land that has captured his imagination. He knew how to face bluster and crafty bargaining, but there was something different about the man beside him now—something a proud fugitive might have in begging sanctuary.

He pulled out his cigarette-case and held it forward. He did not look up, but he felt his client's head shaking and he saw that no hand reached out for a cigarette. He took one himself and lit it.

"You see, this is a far better position than the Show House."

"Yes, I know, but . . ."

"The land in the road where the Show House is built is £3/10/- a foot.

There's a fifty-foot frontage, so you see the house works out at £1000 and the land at £175. This frontage is really worth more than double—there's at least an extra twenty foot depth and I'm not charging for the extra width at the bottom. I tell you it's cheap, Mr. Baldwin!"

Mr. Baldwin turned his head. A deep, stormy sunset was gathering behind the trees across the close; they could have a rustic seat to encircle their elm—the morning sun, and the evening sun would shine upon it and the ridge behind would throw the pink glow upon the cool weathered oak in the lounge.

"I know," murmured Mr. Baldwin, "I know it's worth it." He looked at the manager puffing hard at his cigarette. "But it means this would cost £175 more. I'm awfully afraid—you see, I've retired."

Mr. Watkinson did not reply for a moment. "Would you require us to build the house?"

"Certainly."

The manager looked up more hopefully. "It makes a difference, you see. Some people engage their own builders. I tell you what I'll do, Mr. Baldwin! I'll knock £75 off the land—that means you could have a house built, including everything, for £1225!—It's ridiculous, Mr. Baldwin! I'll get called over the coals, but I want you to have this land because—well, I guess you'll never be happy on any other bit!"

It was awful how the devil of ambition could get a cautious man by the ears and turn him into a spend-thrift. Mr. Baldwin understood now what he had never understood before—how clever, sane men could come the most dreadful crashes over money, simply through ambition—simply because the devil got them by the ears.

The devil certainly had Mr. Baldwin at this moment. A week ago, if a plumber had asked for an extra pound to make a better job than his first estimate allowed for, he would have considered it and brooded over it for days before deciding. And now, having faced and won a fight to place £200 on mortgage, it seemed to matter nothing that an extra £100 were added.

Never had Mr. Baldwin sunk to bargaining, but it came now as naturally as if he had done it all his life. "Make it £1250 and it's done!" he cried, and when the manager shook his head—"I'll give you my cheque for the deposit now—this very moment!"

"We'll lose over it," said Mr. Watkinson. "I could sell that land any day for £7 a foot."

"Sell it to me now!—and begin the house tomorrow!"

There was a final, pregnant silence. The whole valley seemed to be waiting for the Manager's reply. He looked at the man in front of him—the burberry had slipped through his arm and was dangling partly on the ground—he looked at the plump little lady, fiercely gripping her bag between her fingers. "All right," he said. And for some reason that was quite unusual on such occasions, he reached forward and shook Mr. Baldwin's hand. "You've won!"

SOME time later, Edith was saying, "It's these little set-backs that make it so worth doing. I mean, if it was all easy it wouldn't mean nearly so much."

"I know," sighed Mr. Baldwin. "I know."

Edith had said very little in Welden Valley, but she found herself doing most of the talking on the journey home. The strain and excitement had brought a violent reaction upon her husband, and he had almost collapsed in the corner of the carriage. His face was turned to the window—his mind was assailed with forebodings darker than the fields outside.

Now and then an erratic firework would shoot up in the distance and split into a few disappointing sparks; the train rattled over a crossing and some waiting children with fierce moustaches and a shapeless figure in a perambulator reminded them how deeply they had penetrated into the autumn.

"I mean," went on Edith, "if it were easy, everybody would do it, and that would end all the fun and excitement of it."

"That's right," agreed Mr. Baldwin. There was something in everything that Edith said, but nothing, somehow, that got to the root of what was worrying him. The train stopped at a station and went on before he spoke again.

"D'you realise, Edie, what an awful mess we're in?"

Edith laughed a little uneasily. "How d'you mean, Tom?"

A touch of his old impatience returned. "Well—think, dear—ask yourself! We've just agreed to put down £1250 for a new house: we've got to spend nearly £400 on furniture—there's least charges—removal expenses—all kinds of things, and we've actually got in cash—£218!"

"But we've got the Debentures."

"I know, Edie."

"And Gramere?"

He looked up. "Gramere—I know—but supposing nobody buys it, dear? After all, how do we know?"

"Of course somebody'll buy it!"

He shrugged his shoulders and lapsed into silence. Edith felt it better not to disturb him again, and the rest of the homeward journey was disappointingly solemn.

It should have been a progress of triumph: they had walked into Welden Valley and staked their claim upon the finest position on the estate: they had been overwhelmed by the prospect of simply securing a square, formal position beside houses in an ordinary road, with other houses looking at them at close range opposite.

Reality had been unbelievably finer: they had twenty feet more land than the others; it was not only deeper, but it widened out; there was room for vegetables—room for almost anything. They should have journeyed home in a blaze of triumph.

But Mr. Baldwin began to cheer up after supper. The first thing that greeted them upon their arrival home was a large noticeboard in the garden: "THIS CHARMING HOUSE FOR SALE." Timbrell and Dove were obviously smart people to respond so quickly to instructions and it promised well for the future.

And Edith enlarged considerably upon the idea of growing all their own vegetables.

"We'll grow at least ten pounds worth a year," she said. "That'll pay the interest on the mortgage. There's a room for chickens and we could sell a lot of eggs."

"That's certainly an idea, Edie. It'll be grand to have our own vegetables out of that good fresh soil."

The chickens and a whisky and soda were the turning point of his depression. His spirits rose steadily as they sat talking it over by the fire after dinner.

"I'm terribly glad we did what we did this afternoon, Edie: we went much farther than we ought to—we've taken a big risk, but I don't mind, because it's—it's worth it a thousand times! Supposing we hadn't taken that land in Welden Close—supposing we'd been satisfied with a cheap piece in that road—think how awful it would have been to see the spaces filling up round that open green—to have lived in sight of it all the time—watching the houses being built there—watching a house being built on our land! It would have



driven us mad, Edith, we'd have always felt so cheap and mean."

A new thought came, and his eyes gleamed across the fire. "If you realise we're going to be important people, living up there in Welden Close!"

Edith laughed, and rose to go to bed.

"Don't you go getting too proud!" she said. "You know the saying about pride—and falls."

"I know—well, I'll be up soon, dear. Good night."

"Good night, you reckless old gambler!"

He lay back in the armchair to finish his pipe alone—"reckless old gambler" Edith had said it; she had said it in fun, but it was true. Sixty-one next Thursday and suddenly, unbelievably a gambler.

For the first time in his life he felt himself tossing rudderless upon a sea of financial obscurity; for the first time in his life he could not—if suddenly called upon—meet the financial obligations he had made, and yet never in his life had he felt so confident in himself—so sure that he could face unexpected troubles and overcome them. He felt taller, stronger—y younger at heart than ever he could remember.

He rose and crossed to the window to see that the latch was fastened, and suddenly wondered why he troubled about locking the house up when he went to bed. It was a fussy little habit dating back to his timid, solvent days. If a burglar or two came in now he would look over the banisters and laugh at them, and then go down and give them a drink and good-humoredly kick them out.

There was a faint autumn mist round the lamp-post outside; a field mist would be round the trunk of their tree in the valley—a clump of brambles would just have its crown showing above it; a dark lump like a porpoise in a flat, grey sea. Brambles—fancy going down the garden with a paper bag and walking-stick to do an afternoon's blackberrying upon one's own private bushes! He turned off the light and tiptoed up to bed.

The fortune that is traditionally supposed to favor the brave, but which usually gets them into such a mess, came along to give Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin a most encouraging fillip on Saturday morning when Mr. Dove arrived to make an inventory of their furniture.

Mr. Dove was a seedy, battered little man. His clothes were creased in curious directions and his thin, sandy hair was dishevelled. He looked as if he had been run over and hastily cleaned up so as not to miss his appointment. He had a cold in his head and he seemed to sniff contemptuously at each piece of furniture in turn.

He explained several times that there was a terrible slump in second-hand furniture, and that it was cruel to see lovely old stuff knocked down for a song. The Baldwins were thoroughly sick of him by the time he got to the drawing-room.

He was explaining that nobody had drawing-rooms nowadays and was going into it at such length that Mr. Baldwin could have kicked him through the windows into the garden, when he suddenly and unexpectedly became silent. He had opened the little walnut-wood cabinet and taken out one of the dainty, shell-like pieces of china that had come to Edith from the Vicarage.

He looked at it closely and intently; he turned it over, pushed his glasses on to his forehead, and peered at the mark with bulbous, faded eyes.

Then he blinked at Tom and Edith. "You want to sell these?"

"Certainly. Everything."

"These are good."

"Oh!" said Mr. Baldwin, overlooking

in his pleasure the inference that everything else in the house was bad.

Mr. Dove took out several other pieces and examined them in turn. "They came from my home," said Edith.

Mr. Dove did not answer this, but after a moment said: "You don't want to put these in the auction. You wouldn't have the sort of people to give the proper price."

To ask bluntly what they were worth seemed to Mr. Baldwin like shattering them on the floor. He had a feeling that they would grow in value if nobody talked about the price for a little while, but his imagination was leaping nimbly upwards—five—ten—fifty pounds? Supposing it turned out to be one of those fantastic discoveries one read about? Supposing they were a unique set that experts had been searching for, for years and years?

"I'm not an antique valuer," said Mr. Dove. "I'll send a friend of mine this afternoon." He turned his attention once more to the furniture, and began to sniff again; but the Baldwins were so pleased with him over the china that they gave him a glass of sherry before he went. It was a drop that had been in the bottle ever since the Tarrants came to bridge, but he drank it with relish.

"Anyway, he's honest," remarked Mr. Baldwin when he had gone, "some men wouldn't have said a word about good stuff like that and bought it themselves at the auction for a knock-down price."

**M**R. DOVE'S friend came in the afternoon. He was also rather dilapidated and looked as if he had been in the same accident that had crumpled Mr. Dove. He was a slow-moving, elderly man, with long, white hair, a blue-veined nose, and a strong smell of tobacco. He did not take so long to examine the china as Mr. Dove. He offered fifteen pounds.

The Baldwins had hoped for more, but it might easily have been less. In any case, it was a lot more than they had ever expected. But Mr. Baldwin was a business man, and he felt it was perfectly in order to get a second opinion.

"We'll consider it and let you know tomorrow," he said, and the elderly man, with a slow and apparently fruitless glance round the drawing-room, took his departure.

There was an interesting old antique shop in Edgeware Road, and that night, after dark, they approached it furtively, with one of the little saucers wrapped in a silk handkerchief.

An elderly woman peered at the little piece of china, turned on another light, and went to the narrow stairs and called out, "Joseph!"

"I'll get my husband to look at it," she said.

There was a slow shuffling down the stairs, and then, to the Baldwins' unpeppable horror, came a strong and unmistakable odor of stale tobacco, followed by the elderly man with the blue-veined nose who had called that afternoon.

It was the darkest moment in the Baldwins' united lives: never before had they felt so bewildered and humiliated. For one wild, groping moment Mr. Baldwin thought he would pretend he had come to accept the offered price—then he remembered that he had already asked the woman what it was worth.

He was no diplomatist; when forced to think quickly he fell back upon honesty. With a laugh that sounded hollow and unlike his own, he started to explain that they had really come to seek a second opinion and that it was an extraordinary coincidence . . .

The antique dealer waved aside the explanation and showed no sign of annoyance; he went so far as to tell Mr. Baldwin that it was a perfectly correct presumption; there was another antique shop farther down the road—perhaps Mr. Baldwin would like to inquire there.

A humbled Mr. Baldwin said he was perfectly satisfied—he had no desire to inquire further, but the dealer was still anxious to reassure him. "I tell you what, we'll ask the wife—she doesn't know the price I've offered. What would you say to a full set like that, Alice? Half a dozen of each?"

"Ten pounds," said the woman. "The man laughed. 'I've made it fifteen pounds.'"

"If you took more notice of what I say," said the woman, "we'd have a bigger shop than what we've got."

"Maybe," said her husband, pulling out his pipe—and Mr. Baldwin hastily repeated his desire to accept.

"Very well, sir. Fifteen pounds. It's a good, fair price. I'll arrange with the auctioneer, and he will credit you. Good evening, sir. You've forgotten the saucer. Better keep it all together till the sale."

"Thank you," said Mr. Baldwin with heartfelt meaning. They laughed it off on the way home, but Mr. Baldwin still felt as if he had just had a piece of plaster ripped off his stomach.

"I think we must tell Ada," said Edith after dinner.

"I think we must," said Mr. Baldwin. "Pity we didn't tell her before the notice was put up in the garden—and before Mr. Dove came. She must know now."

They had meant to tell Ada a week ago; their first thought had been that she would revel in the comforts and conveniences of a modern home. Their second thought had been different.

Ada was ten years older than either of them; she had been with them seventeen years, and her roots extended a good way beneath the basement. She was really old, and the more Edith thought of it the less she could picture Ada in Welden Valley. It worried her and made her feel unhappy, and she knew that it was best to get it over.

Ada was washing up. She stood with her back half turned to Mrs. Baldwin and listened in silence—a silence that was like a piece of thick, wet flannel. When it was over she partly turned her head and said: "Well, it's nothing to do with me, is it?"

"It's a lot to do with you, Ada. You're one of us and you know what you mean to us. You're in the house far more than us, too."

"But you never told me nothing about it until now." Then she added: "Mind you, it's your business and there's no reason why you should."

"The world'll be so much easier," began Mrs. Baldwin. "You've no idea how convenient everything is."

Then Ada put down the plate she was drying and began. She was not insolent; there was more of sorrow than of anger. What was she going to do on her nights out—in a lot of dark fields without any lamp-posts—falling over cows—and no cinema? And all these modern cleaning ideas—she was not too proud to get down on her knees and scrub.

All her friends lived in Broadzbury; they weren't going to come with her to this country place and she couldn't start making a new lot of her age.

"I know you and the master don't care about friends, but I do!"

She began to lay the plates along the dresser—gleaming, spotless plates; there were two little patches of color in her seamed face. Mrs. Baldwin looked at the old, black uniform, the



clean, starched apron, the prim, little, lace cap that modern servants laughed at—and felt suddenly ashamed.

"I'm sorry, Ada..."  
"There's no need to be sorry, ma'am. You want to make a clean sweep and a clean start in the new house and you can't do that with me around. I'm too old to break in a new set of saucepans now. I got my pension and my sister in Paddington. Don't you worry about me, ma'am—I'll be all right. Maybe I'd have gone in any case soon—what with being near seventy and them basements stairs..."

"I don't like saying it," said Mr. Baldwin, "but I think I'm rather glad. She'd never have settled in. Without a basement she would have been so near to us—and—and—that would have been very difficult when she was in one of her moods. I think it's best, Edie; and, as she says, she would have gone soon in any case. We'll get a young country girl—everything fresh and new."

On three successive evenings after noons the Baldwins went to Welden Valley, partly to discuss the form of their new house, partly to make sure that their land was still there, and that nobody was building a house on it by mistake. Their anxiety in this respect was relieved on the third day when a board marked "Sold" appeared on it.

They went over all the completed houses and climbed precariously among the skeletons of those under construction; they studied piles of plans, admired numerous attractive designs, and decided that nothing was better than the show house they had originally seen.

Apart from the charm of its design, the Baldwins knew that they would never forget their first visit to it. They owed everything to it, and to possess a house exactly like it would enshrine a memory.

Mr. Watkinson suggested several small but excellent improvements: the deepening of the bay window in the dining-room to catch the sunset; a small additional window in the best bedroom to give a view of the footpath up to its disappearance over the crest of the hill; a slightly darker tile.

"We're finding things out every day," he said, "and your house will have the benefit of it, right up till the moment it is finished."

By having a house exactly the dimensions of the show house, Edith was able to measure up for the curtains and begin making them at once. They thought at first that they could not better the color scheme of the show house, but Mr. Watkinson was very honest about it.

"If I were furnishing that house again," he said, "I would not have powder-blue carpets. They're very charming, but they're not suited to the country. People are in and out so much and every little spot shows." He took them across and illustrated what he meant.

They decided upon fawn as the predominating color—a heathery shade of fawn for the carpets and a slightly deeper shade for the mats; cream-colored walls and blue upholstery and curtains. Mr. Watkinson entered into everything as though he were going to live in the house himself. When they explained their color scheme he seemed overcome at the very thought of it.

If anything, he was a bit too interested, and once or twice Mr. Baldwin found himself in heated argument, particularly when Mr. Watkinson made the appalling suggestion that they should have the branches of their elm lopped off, apparently down to its bare trunk. Mr. Baldwin stared at him in amazement.

"I'll sprout again in a couple of years," said Mr. Watkinson.  
"You suggest—having—our elm lopped?"

Mr. Watkinson nodded. "It's entirely up to you, Mr. Baldwin. It's your tree, but you know, it's very big, and elms are treacherous things."

"I wouldn't dream of it!" exclaimed Mr. Baldwin.

The manager shrugged his shoulders. "We had a big one blown down on our Cobham Estate; cracked a garage open like an egg."

"I'll risk that."

"It's not only your own property to consider. It may fall the other way upon someone else's house."

"I can insure against that," replied Mr. Baldwin very curtly, and the matter dropped.

For an extra £50 they arranged to have cupboards built in and wardrobes with long mirrors in their doors.

"We shall begin building," announced the manager, "in a fortnight's time. I shall have the road up to your plot by then."

"And when," asked Mr. Baldwin, "can we move in?"

"Don't make it before the end of March," said Mr. Watkinson.

"The end of March. But—but—that's five months!"

Mr. Watkinson nodded. "I don't want you to be disappointed. I should not be treating you fairly by letting you in before. Let me have the drying March winds on the house before I do the painting. If I paint before the walls have dried you will only have to paint again. Give me time. Mr. Baldwin, time to let the foundations settle, time to give you something we can both be proud of!"

Despite their disappointment they had to agree. The houses in the road by the estate office seemed to be growing before their eyes, and they had confidently hoped to be in by Christmas. It was awful to face a lingering winter in "Grasmere," for the sale's board in their garden had broken their last bonds with the old house and they felt like restless, discontented lodgers.

"And yet," said Edith, "the spring will be a wonderful time."

They could have spared their disappointment, for now that things had really started time gathered wings and flew with amazing swiftness. They scarcely noticed the days deepening into winter, and the long, dark evenings that Edith had dreaded were not long enough for all they had to do.

**B**OTH Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin began an orgy of mat-making. Estimates showed that they would need eight in all—two large ones for the bedroom and six smaller ones for the doorways. It was no longer a matter of spinning out the work to fill in time. Mr. Baldwin set himself to do a square foot per day and grew feverishly impatient when he had to lay off for a week with cramp in his fingers.

From tea until dinner he would read by the fire while Edith sat up at the table for the light to work upon the curtains. His books were "Garden Planning," "Bird Life in England," and magazines that told him a hundred and one things about the making of a home.

Sometimes he would lay down his book and watch Edith with a wistful smile as she bent over the delicate filmy curtains. Even with her spectacles on her nose and the pool of light shining upon her whitening hair she seemed like a girl wife working with trembling and caressing eagerness upon the tiny clothes of a baby that would come to her in the spring.

One day Mr. Baldwin stole his heart and undertook a terrific clean-

out of old letters and paper and made a bonfire in the garden. It needed a special mood to destroy the hoarded relics of a lifetime, and he worked like a demon while the mood was upon him.

If old receipts had been attractive to collectors he could have made a fortune; there was a complete set of Water Board's receipts from 1839 in perfect condition, and the stamps upon them covered three reigns. There were stacks of letters that he burned with blind recklessness, knowing full well that if he opened and read one he would sit down and read the rest and keep them.

He emptied every drawer right down to the fluff-encompassed pins, and when it was over he dug the little gray heap of smoking flakes into the soil of the shrubbery.

One afternoon there was an unexpected knock at the door, and a young couple arrived with an order from the estate agent to view the house. They were the first people to come, and they inspected everything with polite appreciation. They were getting married, the young man said, and his father-in-law had promised them a house.

They were interested in "Grasmere," but suddenly got much more interested when the Baldwins explained why they intended to sell. They said they thought it was a splendid idea and would build a house themselves. They left with grateful thanks and the Baldwins decided to keep their plans to themselves another time.

The estate agents were getting very lively, for people arrived upon an average, twice a week. The Baldwins began to get tired of pointing out the beauties of "Grasmere," particularly as some people obviously came out of curiosity without any idea of buying.

Some were polite, some were indifferent; one or two were quite rude.

"It's scandalous!" exclaimed Mr. Baldwin after a visit from a woman with a harsh voice and a sharp nose who had used the words "dark," "damp," "stuffy" and "inconvenient" at least three times each in as many minutes. "I shall tell Timbrell to be more careful about the people he sends in future."

But as it happened, one of the rudest and most thoroughly unattractive visitors sprang from the first surprise.

He called himself Ranken-Dudley. He was a very tall, dusty-looking man with a mane of black hair and a big, pale, pitted face. He brought with him a disconcerting young woman who was not his wife but whom he called "kiddy." He introduced her as Miss Sarda Northcote, and she had vivid carmine lips and green earrings.

He was a teacher of elocution and explained that he had been in Hollywood for some years, teaching silent film stars how to talk. He had returned with a view to opening a school of voice production in London. He looked about him as if he were searching for somebody he disliked and soon decided that "Grasmere" was quite unsuitable.

"I shall require a big room for my classes," he said.

For answer, Mr. Baldwin threw open the partition between the dining-room and drawing-room.

"We've sat thirty people here at a whist drive—and once had forty to a tennis club musical evening."

Mr. Ranken-Dudley was impressed but not convinced.

"If we did that we'd have nowhere to live ourselves."

"There are three large rooms upstairs—and two on the second floor. How many would there be in the family?"

"Just us two," said Mr. Ranken-Dudley a trifle shortly.

"Well!" said Mr. Baldwin.

They went away, but came back next afternoon. Mr. Ranken-Dudley wanted to look at the big room again to see if



alterations could be made. They were the first people to make a second visit, and the Baldwins offered them a cup of tea. Miss Sarda Northcote left a large Turkish cigarette-end in her saucer, and a bright ermine lip-print on her cup.

Next morning came a letter from Timbrell and Dove.

"Dear Mr. Baldwin—I am very pleased to inform you that our client Mr. Ranken-Dudley is definitely interested in 'Grasmere'. It is somewhat small for his purpose, but he is considering the possibility of certain structural alterations.

"We have informed Mr. Ranken-Dudley that your price is £850, and having in mind the limit of £750 recently fixed with you, we are given room for negotiation.

"I trust that we shall have further news in the course of a few days."

Nothing happened for a week, and then Mr. Timbrell himself appeared. He tried to put on a casual manner, but he was obviously pleased with himself.

"I've brought you some good news, Mr. Baldwin."

"Oh?—good."

"Mr. Ranken-Dudley has been to see us this morning. He offers £900."

"Eight hundred pounds? By jove—that's—that's good!"

Mr. Timbrell crossed his legs—put his fingertips together and smiled.

"I told him you would not consider it. I stood firm at £825."

Mr. Baldwin curdled inside and stared at the agent in disgusted astonishment. It was the sort of fool thing he would do—a little man of his type would get above himself and let a good thing slip away out of sheer conceit!

"But, surely! Eight hundred pounds is fifty more than—"

"I stood firm," broke in Mr. Timbrell. "at £825—after a hard fight I got him to agree."

"You mean he'll—he'll pay £825?"

Mr. Timbrell nodded and beamed. "I knew you would be pleased."

The cherry had all gone, so they gave Mr. Timbrell a whisky and soda and a biscuit. Although it was only eleven o'clock, he appeared quite at ease with it.

"He would like to take possession at Lady Day, so you can practically step straight out of this house into your new one."

Mr. Baldwin promised to get the deeds from his solicitor and Mr. Timbrell departed, smelling brightly of the hospitality afforded him.

"Well, Edie," said Mr. Baldwin. "what do you think about that? Seventy-five pounds more than we expected—fifty for that chinal! There's still a chance of keeping out of the Bankruptcy Courts! What a good thing it was we stuck to the land we wanted. We might have been kicking ourselves now for finking that grand bit in Welden Close and taking a miserable piece down the road!"

"Thank goodness we didn't," said Edith. "I think you were wonderful that first day with Mr. Watkinson—the way you stuck to what you wanted—and got it!"

And Mr. Baldwin, modest though he was, had to agree.

They sat silent for a while, then Edith poised what both of them were thinking: "So poor old 'Grasmere' really gone."

One glorious morning in mid-December Mr. Baldwin conceived the idea of taking their walk from Stanmore once again. He wanted to come out upon the crest of the ridge and look down at his land; he was aching to see whether they had started work, but he wanted to see by himself, without the estate manager at his elbow.

"Do you realise, Edie, that we've been six times and we've never really been

alone? They won't be working on a Saturday afternoon, so we can just stay as long as we like and really look at it."

They took sandwiches this time, and lunched on the stile beside the copse where they had seen the hedgehog. He insisted upon Edith taking frequent rests as they began to mount the higher ground, although he was itching to get on to make the most of the short December afternoon. As they drew near the crest of the hill, the elms in the valley gently reared their crowns above the horizon, and they paused to guess which crown was theirs.

And then the valley lay beneath them and they stood for a while like explorers upon the rim of a promised land. It was near the shortest day, and the fading sun had laid soft beams across the meadows, blackening the thorn trees and lighting the grey winter streaks in the wiry grass.

**I**t took them some moments to get their bearings, for even in six weeks the valley had changed beyond belief. Two houses that had been but a thicket of scaffolding had grown stout walls, and a ribbon of white road had swept along two sides of Welden Close. They saw the white tapes that marked the unmade road; they followed them past the yew clumps and close beneath two elms—and suddenly Mr. Baldwin squeezed Edith's arm.

"Look!"

It was hard to make out exactly what had happened; their tree was all right, and they could see the white pegs that marked their boundaries. Beneath the tree lay something that looked like a ladder, and beside it was a pile of something, either bricks or timber. Then, as their eyes grew accustomed to the light, they could see rolled stacks of turf and the faint outlines of foundations.

"They've started!" said Mr. Baldwin. "Come on!"

The workmen at one of the half-built houses had left a bonfire smouldering and some time during the afternoon an eddy of wind had smudged a streak of smoke across the valley and left it there. The valley seemed quite desolate, but, remembering the surprising way in which young Mr. Morrison had once appeared from nowhere, the Baldwins descended the slopes with stealth and well-nigh tiptoed to their land under cover of the gorse bushes. They wanted no one with them this afternoon.

It was certainly a ladder beneath the tree—an old, paint-encrusted ladder that looked as if it had served many a growing house—but the heap that looked from a distance like bricks or timber was actually an old tarpaulin thrown over two wheelbarrows, a pile of sand, and some bags of cement.

"Of course," remarked Mr. Baldwin, "cement—foundations." He looked triumphantly at Edith. "Things are beginning all right now!"

Mr. Baldwin produced a tape measure. It was only five feet long but quite adequate for measuring their boundaries. He began from one of the front pegs and instructed Edith to mark each point it reached with the tip of her umbrella. He also told her to keep an eye open for Mr. Watkinson, for, although he was perfectly within his rights in measuring up the land, he did not want to be caught doing it.

He found, on twice measuring the frontage, that he was three inches short.

"That's near enough," said Edith, who was getting a bit tired of it.

"At £1 a foot, my dear, an inch is worth over tenpence."

One peg was leaning inwards a little, which no doubt accounted for the discrepancy. So he kicked it straight, and

in doing so it went comfortably over towards the next plot, adding a couple of inches to his territory.

"You often find," he pointed out, "that those tape measures shrink, and we must allow for it."

It was good to be alone; it was possible to plan something of the garden and he drew a rough sketch showing the position of the elm, the house, the thorn tree, and tower of brambles. He wanted to elaborate this at leisure so that the permanent features could be woven into his final design.

As the sun dropped below the crest, the valley was filled with a strange, uncertain glow that lingered on beyond the normal span of sunset; the ground was dark, but the sky remained light grey and faintly sunlit.

The foundations of the house were puzzling at first; the front door seemed so extremely narrow and they appeared to have forgotten to make an entrance to the dining-room.

"I expect they know," said Edith, as Mr. Baldwin stood scratching his forehead. "It'll straighten itself out as it goes along and I'm sure good people wouldn't forget a doorway."

"It all looks frightfully small, doesn't it?" said Mr. Baldwin. "I mean—look here—surely the lounge is going to be bigger than this!"

The little square of grass within the clay borders of the room seemed no larger than a tool-shed, but it was certainly eighteen feet by fifteen feet when they measured it. It was very deceptive, but it was also a unique experience to stand upon soil they would never see again when once the strong white boards had spanned it.

"You see the fireplace here, Edie? This is where your chair will be—and this is where I shall have mine. It's nice to see how clean and fresh it's going to be underneath."

"Funny," said Edith, "to think of my chair being right on top of this rabbit hole!"

"And mine," put in Mr. Baldwin, "on top of a bunch of thistles!"

They lingered on their land till a ground mist lapped their knees and lights began to twinkle in Welden Village. Mr. Baldwin strolled up and down within his pegged-out frontiers; he was where the rustic pergola would go; he planned a gate at its far end to open upon the footpath.

"We ought to have brought our tea with us and had it in the lounge!"

As they went towards the village, they met two other people gazing at the houses in the road beside the estate office; two pleasant, youngish people who looked interestedly at Tom and Edith as they passed.

"Good evening," said the man.

"Good evening," said Mr. Baldwin, and then, unlike himself, he added, "Coming to live here?"

"Yes," said the man, "this is our house," and he pointed to the one with the Tudor gables.

"Oh, really?—Mr. Watkinson allowed us to look inside. I think it's charming."

"You do?" said the young man in an eager voice. "We—we thought so, too. Are you going to live here?"

"Why, yes. Up there in Welden Close—by that elm, there."

"Splendid—I expect we shall meet again."

And the woman, who was really only a girl, flashed a smile at Mrs. Baldwin and said: "We're starting to furnish next week."

"We're getting ready, too," said Edith.

"You must come in soon and see what kind of a mess I've made of it!"

"I'm certain it won't be a mess," laughed Edith, "but I'd love to see it."

"Fancy talking to strangers in a way like that in Brondesbury Terrace!" said Mr. Baldwin as they went their



way. He took Edith's arm and drew her towards him. "I believe it's going to be splendid here."

"I'm sure of it," she said. "They broke their backs to the lady in the tea-shop as they sat in the alcove by the fire. She was delighted."

"It's going to be a beautiful estate," she told them. "Lots of people have been coming to see it; nice people—and I know three already who are having houses built. It's going to be a wonderful thing for the village."

"They asked if she knew of a girl who would like to come to work for them, and the woman promised to keep an eye open and let them know. They also told her they would certainly want to have their cakes and bread from her."

"And that means we shall eat too much!" called back Mr. Baldwin to the broad figure in the glowing doorway. "Come on, Edie—we'll have to hurry!"

As the days sped by with gathering swiftness, and the evenings began to stretch out lingering trailers of twilight, the Baldwins grew increasingly thankful that they had not attempted to move before the end of March. Five months, upon first reflection, seemed a hideous time to wait, but when it came to the point, five months contained not a day too many for the countless things to be done.

Half the enjoyment, reflected Mr. Baldwin, would have been lost in the hopeless disorganisation and anxiety of a hurried move to a damp, half-furnished house.

The buying of the new furniture alone demanded a fortnight's concentration. Mr. Baldwin had hit upon the idea of making the furniture a definite purchase out of the money from Edith's Debentures, so that, while the house and land were his, the furniture was Edith's. By this means he made her feel that her sacrifice had gained her a definite and visible stake in the new house.

They wandered miles through a labyrinth of sideboards and bedroom suites; they glided themselves upon weathered oak and well-nigh suffocated themselves in mattresses and quilts, and Mr. Baldwin discovered the remarkable difference between buying and selling.

When he had marched into a small, shabby estate office and announced in a crisp, authoritative voice, "We want to sell a house," he had felt as though somebody had opened a refrigerator door with one hand and cut the heels off his boots with the other. But when he had walked timidly into a palatial West End store and murmured, "We want to buy some furniture," it seemed as if his heels were replaced with a deep bow and the whole building quivered with deference.

It appeared to Mr. Baldwin a little strange, for selling seemed to him as honorable as buying.

But while furnishing preparations were completed by the middle of January, they grew seriously concerned about the progress of the new house. As far as they could see, the builders had spent a few days laying the foundations and making a thorough mess upon their future garden, and then disappeared and completely lost interest in it.

Upon three successive visits in three successive weeks, they were disgusted and disturbed to find nothing but a few dreary few layers of cement and a muddy, trampled patch of grass. It looked terribly as if the builders had got into some awful kind of mess, and did not know how to continue the job. Mr. Baldwin began to wonder if what he had feared was actually true, and that they had completely forgotten the doorway to the lounge and were frightened to admit it.

On the fourth visit not only was there nothing further done, but some workmen had had the stupidity to throw a heap of woodchips across their blackberry clump and beset the bushes down. Mr. Baldwin strode to the estate office with his blood boiling.

Mr. Watkinson was away in London and the foreman builder seemed more surprised than apologetic.

"You mean those blackberry bushes, sir?"

"Yes—I mean those blackberry bushes!"

"We never thought for a moment you'd be leaving 'em there, sir—we thought you'd have them out so as to make the garden. But I'll have the stuff moved at once."

"And when," proceeded Mr. Baldwin, "do you intend to begin my house?—Nothing seems to have been touched for six weeks."

"Well, sir, you can't build on soft cement. You'd have the walls cracking in a few months. You've got to let the foundations settle in a bit."

"Excuse me!" burst out Mr. Baldwin as he stalked away. "It's always the same—give people plenty of time to make a thorough job and they ignore it completely and go ahead on jobs that people worry for: then you make a fuss and there's a mad rush at the last moment! Here's the end of January and nothing done!"

They kept clear of Welden Valley for a fortnight, but when they made their next visit there was such a scene of activity that Mr. Baldwin felt a little ashamed of his impatience. It was as if a magician had waved his wand, the scene had altered so incredibly; the walls were at least twelve feet high and a dozen or more men were creeping among a mass of scaffolding, hammering, clicking, scraping, whistling.

A carpenter was planing window frames—two laborers were digging a trench for drains—the foreman builder himself, in a bowler hat with a patch of white powder on it, was consulting with a keen-eyed plus-foured young man in the roofless lounge.

"It's only because you made a fuss," whispered Edith.

Mr. Baldwin nodded with a grim smile, but even now he did not look entirely satisfied.

"I hope they don't hurry too much," he said.

He would have been happier if the men on the scaffolding had been laying bricks more deliberately—had whistled less and concentrated more.

THE next visit revealed an even more fevered scene: the house was crawling with men and Mr. Watkinson himself came out of the front door as they approached.

"Ah! Mr. Baldwin. Good morning, Mrs. Baldwin!" and he turned with a contented grunt to view the house in perspective.

It was difficult for the Baldwins to grow accustomed to the fact that all this turmoil, all this human activity was for them—and them alone! It did not, somehow, look like the house they had ordered—and yet, as they stood looking at it, it gradually seemed to mould itself into what they had expected. It seemed a little squat and crouching—the window frames were at present a bright, startling pink, and against the pale unfinished plastered walls they made the house look like a surprised white cow, with inflamed eyelids.

"We'll have the roof on it in a fortnight," said Mr. Watkinson. "In five weeks from now we'll be finished. That'll give us a good month for decorating and drying. And then," he said

proudly, "we start three more houses—there—and there—and there."

"All round us?" laughed Mr. Baldwin. "All round you," confirmed the manager—"but don't worry—the noisy part will be over before you come in."

The Baldwins took their departure with lighter hearts. The furnishings were to have a fortnight to lay the carpets and set the furniture.

"And now," said Mr. Baldwin, "we simply must settle on a name."

The finding of a name should have been an amusing little pastime compared with the hard material side of the adventure, but repeated attempts to agree had brought a widening divergence that threatened to develop into serious conflict. Both were thinking along different avenues, and they had reached a stage when they instinctively disagreed with the other's suggestions almost before they were made.

Edith's ideas to Mr. Baldwin's mind were far too sweet and sentimental to last out a winter: "Restbrook," "Larkrise," "Lavender Corner," "Peace Haven," while Mr. Baldwin, in Edith's opinion, was asking for trouble with thinly disguised puns and jokes like "Firstcome," "Open House" and "Clean Sweep."

He stuck to "Firstcome" with irritating pigheadedness. "After all, we did come first to Welden Close—so why not be proud of it?"

"I know," said Edith, "but it's ugly."

He suggested "Chetleigh," the name of the village where Edith was born, but she was against it, and retaliated with "Baronsmead," after the road in which his father's house had stood.

And like so many long-drawn, awkward problems, it was settled in the end, and, as Mr. Baldwin put it, "with a sudden click." The roof was on, and the wash-basins were being carried in by a procession of men who looked like disablers at a medieval banquet. They were standing with the manager discussing the final painting of the exterior.

"Green," agreed Tom and Edith. "A rich, deep green."

"You're right," said the manager. "You're never wrong with green; it'll look well against light coffee-cream walls. And the gates?"

"Green," said Mr. Baldwin. "Green gates."

"And that's the name of the house!" said Edith. "Greengates!"

"No," said Mr. Baldwin, by force of habit. And then, after a pause: "Edith, you're right. 'Greengates' is right."

And "Greengates" it became.

Three weeks, a month, three weeks, a fortnight. The sands were running out at "Greengates" and the last few days slipped by in a fever of forgotten details. Mysterious forms had to be filled in concerning the surrender of the gas stove, meters had to be checked; there were visits to London concerning the £200 mortgage—the deeds of "Greengates"—the sale of the debentures—the insurance. Mr. Baldwin wrote by hand and posted to all concerned.

"Kindly note that as from the 26th March, the address of Mr. and Mrs. T. H. Baldwin will be:

"Greengates,"  
Welden Close,  
Welden Valley,  
Telephone Welden 227.  
Station: Welden."

One afternoon the notice of auction appeared in the front garden in place of the "For Sale" board and Mr. Dove came to label the furniture. He said that the house must be entirely surrendered to him on the day before the sale.

"I'll want to strip the beds and do up the blankets and everything," explained Mr. Dove.

But the Baldwins were adamant.



"We don't care what the house is like—we're going to sleep the last night here and move straight away to Welden Valley directly the sale's over."

But the auctioneer also dug his heels in. "We've got to do up all the kitchen utensils—the curtains up in bundles—the house'll be impossible that night. There's a comfortable little boarding-house opposite our office that'd make you welcome."

But this was not according to Mr. Baldwin's plan: he wanted to hold an indefinite period between the old home and the new; he wanted to sleep at "Grasmere" on the last night, attend the sale in the morning, and when the sale was over he wanted to close the door, surrender the key, and allow the new life to open upon the moment that the old one closed.

It was clear that Mr. Dove did not appreciate the drama and sentiment of the scheme; he finally shrugged his shoulders and said, "Well, if you insist. But I warn you that Thursday's not going to be comfortable—and our men'll have to be in here by eight o'clock on Friday morning."

"We'll be up and ready for them," said Mr. Baldwin. "And anything that's disturbed by us that night will be put back as the men leave it."

"Very well," said Mr. Dove, with an ominous look in his eye.

Tom and Edith were early astir on the morning before the auction, and they caught the 8.15 to Welden Valley. "Greengates" was ready and the furniture was promised at ten o'clock. They arrived soon after nine and opened the glistening front door with a glistening little morrice key that Mr. Watkinson handed them with ceremony at the estate office. For an hour they roamed the clean, paint-odored rooms.

"We shall never see it like this again," said Mr. Baldwin.

Soon after ten two big motor-vans came swaying slowly into Welden Close. The first van jolted several times, lurched dangerously, and stopped dead a hundred yards from the house.

The Baldwins went down to investigate and found that its front wheels had sunk deeply and hopelessly into the sticky, yellow clay. It moaned on low gear once or twice, sank lower, and stopped exhausted. The driver climbed down in disgust, and half an hour passed before a fussy little tractor belonging to the estate came along and pulled the lorry out.

"Better keep off the road and try and get across the grass," advised the tractor driver. It was not a very encouraging beginning. The furniture men began work in a bad temper and Edith was terrified lest they bang the stuff about.

But in a few minutes the work was in full swing. The carpets had been laid the previous day and the Baldwins went from room to room, directing operations and occasionally getting a bump that once or twice seemed intentional.

By lunchtime the lounge and the dining-room were ready and the Baldwins undid a packet of sandwiches and ate them upon a newspaper spread out on the weathered oak table while the men retired to refresh themselves in their vans. By tea-time the work was done.

Mr. Baldwin gave the chief man a ten-shilling note, the vans gingerly departed across the grass, and they were alone in a furnished "Greengates" for the first time.

There was too much to be done to give much time for meditation: a large crate in the kitchen contained all the new pots and pans and china; another crate, brought by carrier from "Grasmere," contained the few things that had survived from the old house: their

own clothing—the clock presented to Mr. Baldwin by the staff of the office, and a few wedding presents and personal belongings that could not be destroyed or sold.

Mrs. Chambers, of the tea-shop, had fulfilled her promise to find them a girl, and produced no less a person than her own niece, Peggy—a girl exactly after the style that the Baldwins had hoped for.

Peggy arrived at four o'clock for an interview: a sturdy, country-looking girl, and produced no less a person gray eyes, and large pink hands. It was arranged that she should come in next day, make the beds, generally clear up, learn how to work the stove, and prepare dinner for them at 7.30.

A man arrived to fix the electric lamps and Edith worked like a Trojan on the curtains and bedrooms while Mr. Baldwin packed the new linen in the heated cupboard and boiled out the new saucepans and kettle.

They left soon after tea, for the auctioneer's men were at "Grasmere" and the Baldwins wanted to keep an eye on them to see that they did not dismantle their bed. As they dragged themselves wearily to the station they were happy to think that everything was ready for them in Welden Valley when the door of "Grasmere" closed next day.

"Pshaw!" said Mr. Baldwin. "What a time it's been!"

And Edith, with a wan smile, said: "It has been harder than I thought!"

They were glad to have found a promising girl like Peggy—but their happiness even now was tinged with a little sadness. For after dinner that evening at "Grasmere"—after their last dinner in the old house—after the dinner things had been washed up and put into their places in the sad old basement kitchen, Ada would take off her stiff, starched apron, put on her rusty old coat and green hat with the artificial cherries on it, and come up to say goodbye.

**T**HE ominous prophecies of Mr. Dove were more than fulfilled when they returned home, and the ravages with "Grasmere" were apparent even from the front gate. The window curtains had disappeared and the old house stared at them reproachfully with gaunt, lashless eyes. The front door stood listlessly ajar and their feet echoed across the matless, carpetless hall.

Mr. Baldwin dropped his umbrella into Lot 1 and hung his hat upon Lot 2. The partition between the dining-room and drawing-room had been thrown back and all the chairs in the house had been collected and lined up in rows for the comfort of those who were to attend the sale next day. A small rostrum had been built in front of the drawing-room window and the dining-room table had been pushed far away into a corner.

Even the old pendulum clock on the mantelpiece had been defaced by a large white ticket marked Lot 29 and Tom and Edith were very thankful that their absence in Welden Valley had spared them from watching the end of the old house. They realised how right Mr. Dove had been in urging them to sleep elsewhere on this last evening.

In every room the curtains were down and the carpets rolled and stacked in corners, and every piece of furniture, large and small, had been removed from its old position and placed in readiness for disposal. Their bedroom alone remained a small oasis in a desert of bare floors and walls, although even there the carpet had been rolled up and the furniture labelled.

The men departed at six o'clock, and it was uncanny to see Ada come up the

basement stairs in her same old uniform, a cloth under her arm, and a handful of cutlery for dinner. Her face was like a mask as she edged her way between the chairs to spread the cloth on the table in the corner. The Baldwins did not attempt either to joke or apologise to her over the appalling muddle, and the old lady appeared to expect nothing to be said.

She moved to and fro in her stiff, black uniform like a ghost of an old serving lady in the twilight ruins of an ancient home.

Edith went up to wash and Mr. Baldwin tried to cheer up the dull, ash-laden fire.

It was a sad, incongruous little dinner: incongruous because despite its queer position in the corner of the drawing-room, the table was set exactly as if the evening were one of the thousands that were past.

Mr. Baldwin's place was laid upon the usual side, facing the dining-room window, Edith's one the side towards the door and nearest to the bell. The salt cellar, the pepper pot, and the mustard jar stood huddled in their usual corner like three little fugitives upon a desert island.

It was almost as if Ada had maliciously planned to stir remorse with her master and mistress on this final evening, for Edith in the hurry of the day, had left the old lady to arrange the last meal at "Grasmere" herself. She brought them a mixed grill, and an apple tart with junket; dishes she had been told were her most successful and most relished by her people.

Tom and Edith could well have managed upon a few makeshift slices of pressed beef, for the festive little meal gathered memories that tightened the throat. At such moments the bad times sink away and the good ones crowd in with all their wistful sadness.

Mr. Baldwin had not expected to feel sad; he had anticipated a keen romance and excitement—and he was disturbed that such unexpected memories came to him. The wide-open partition reminded him of the far-off days when he had been treasurer of the Acacia Tennis Club and the two rooms had been thrown together and used for musical evenings that had followed the babble and merriment of the general meetings. He could almost hear the official business.

Good days—but memories: the members of the old club had scattered far and wide and he had no reason to feel sad. They were strangers in Brondesbury now and they had no ties to break with old neighbors.

"Pity Ada's not coming," he said, and even his low voice brought an echo from the curtainless window-pane. "Did you ask that girl if she could cook?"

"She's been helping Mrs. Chambers in the bakery," said Edith, "she's bound to be all right."

"Poor old Ada. Pity she's not ten years younger. She would have enjoyed 'Greengates'—I wonder what she's thinking about down there!"

He had to climb over three rows of chairs to reach the bell and ring for Ada to clear away. There was nowhere to sit comfortably in the dining-room, for their armchairs were wedged in a corner and buried under piles of books. They went upstairs and wandered aimlessly from room to room, waiting for the sound of Ada coming up the basement stairs to say goodbye.

Even in their bedroom they felt conspicuous against the uncurtained window, so they switched off the light and stood looking down the dark road until they felt that Ada must be ready.

Once or twice Mr. Baldwin went to the head of the stairs and stood listening for the signs of the old lady's departure. He could hear the familiar sounds of running water—cupboards



opening—plates being lined on the dresser shelves; he heard her poking the fire from the kitchen range; he heard the kitchen door open and the clang of the dishing lid. Then there was a long silence and at last the slow, heavy tread on the basement stairs.

They went down to the hall to meet her. She had a shapeless little attache-case with a strap round it for safety, and a short, stubby umbrella. The cherries in her hat nodded grimly at them as she put down her bag to shake hands.

"It's not goodbye, Ada," said Mrs. Baldwin, "because you've got to come and see us often in Walden Valley."

"I'll be glad to, ma'am. You'll find everything's put straight in the kitchen. There's a good sackful of coal in the shed they ought to allow you for, and the man never came for the jam jars. I've put some cold sausages and the cold tart in the cupboard so as you'll have a bite for lunch. Goodbye, sir. Goodbye, ma'am. I hope you'll be all right in the new house."

Mr. Baldwin, who was in his pocket, produced a wad of paper, and pressed it into Ada's hand.

"Something from us both, Ada. We wish you were coming with us."

"Thank you, sir." She put the envelope in her purse and picked up her bag. She turned to go down the basement stairs to the kitchen door, and for the first time in all the years Mr. Baldwin laid his hand upon her arm. He led her to the front door and opened it for her.

They watched her fumble with the gate, close it carefully, and go away into the night. When they turned back into the house it seemed suddenly to have grown cold and dead. An icy stillness lay in the black shadows of the basement stairs; a solitary glowing eye peered at them from the dining-room fire; Mr. Baldwin looked at his wife, and their eyes met.

"Let's go to the pictures, Edie. We can't stay here."

They got home at eleven o'clock, glanced round the dark, deserted house, and went straight to bed.

The sale was announced to begin at ten o'clock, and at nine-thirty Mr. Dove arrived with his clerk and two middle-aged, shapeless men who put on green aprons in the hall. Mr. Dove looked round suspiciously and asked Mrs. Baldwin whether she was quite certain that everything they had used had been returned to the exact position of the previous night.

"I once knew a sale ruined because some of the lots had been moved and couldn't be found. It's got to run slick—without a hitch. You've got to keep people concentrated."

The Baldwins left Mr. Dove checking over the catalogue with his clerk and went up to sit at their bedroom window. It was nearly ten o'clock and they were very curious to see what kind of people were coming to the sale.

As the clock struck ten it looked terribly as though the whole thing was going to be a ghastly fiasco. Exactly three people had arrived: a young shabbily dressed couple and a stout lady who looked as if she had come out of curiosity.

The young couple did not even appear to have any original intention of coming at all, for they peered up at the notice in the garden, discussed the matter at some length, looked at their watches, and entered self-consciously as people to a circus side-show.

Mr. Baldwin was in an agony of suspense. He even thought of going down to tell Mr. Dove to call the sale off to avoid the stout lady buying everything at a shilling a lot—and then, gradually, things began to happen. People arrived

in twos and threes and some even came in cars. Most of them were women and they recognised several people from the neighborhood.

Then came a few men, singly: men of a type, whom the Baldwins took to be furniture dealers; they were pleased at the arrival of the old tobacco-odored man of the antique shop, for he had evidently spotted something during his visit and had come to snap it up.

Mr. Dove had told them it was not unusual for people to attend the sale of their own furniture, but, to avoid being conspicuous, they put on their hats and coats to make it appear as if they were ordinary people, and went downstairs.

ABOUT a dozen people were wandering about, looking at the lots and comparing them with their catalogues, and still a few were coming in.

They could see no sign of Mr. Dove and were beginning to wonder what had happened when Edith touched her husband's arm and pointed to the windows leading into the garden. There was Mr. Dove, and he was behaving in a most extraordinary way.

He was standing on the iron balcony outside the windows, leaning on the balustrade, gazing into the garden with his back to the room. He was languidly smoking a cigarette and appeared completely oblivious to the things happening within the house. He might have been a thousand miles at sea, lounging on the promenade deck of a liner.

Mr. Baldwin wondered what on earth he was doing, until suddenly a remarkable change took place. He pulled out his watch and seemed to brace himself for a great exertion; he threw the cigarette into the garden, swung round, and strode into the room.

He had obviously staged his entrance, for he banged the windows to behind him and the clatter brought immediate attention. He stood motionless before stepping on to his rostrum; the audience seated themselves, and he rapped the table with a small mallet.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have a great deal to do today. We have one hundred and twenty-seven valuable lots to dispose of, and I shall be very obliged if you will help me by giving me your attention as closely as possible."

"I need say little in introducing this interesting sale. I have carefully examined every piece and can guarantee its condition without reserve. The majority of these choice pieces have come from old country houses, and the owners are reluctantly disposing of them for one reason alone: they are moving to a new house and wish to furnish afresh."

"I can only add that pieces of this quality and condition very rarely come on to the market, and I hope you will give everything the consideration it deserves. All right, Bert!"

The speech ended surprisingly and abruptly, and all eyes were turned towards the door as one of the green-aproned assistants wheeled in with Lot 1—the umbrella stand.

Mr. Baldwin felt a pang as he saw his old friend held up before twenty pairs of curious eyes. He wondered how many thousand times the tin base had rung with the pop of his umbrella. But he soon found himself too interested in the proceedings to think of the personal side.

Mr. Dove obviously realised the need of a little wit to warm up his audience.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, what, above all things, do we need in this good old country of ours? An umbrella! Second only to our umbrellas we need a stand to put them in—and here's an opportunity to give your umbrellas a

home to be proud of! Lot 1: Umbrella stand of seasoned oak; sound lead base; perfect shape and fit any hall—large or small. Now then, ladies and gentlemen, who's going to be the lucky possessor of Lot 1? Remember that Lot 1 brings luck!"

"Half a crown," said the stout lady who had been the first arrival. Her effort brought on a fit of coughing, followed by three incredibly quick, staccato sneezes.

There was a suppressed laugh, and the Baldwins looked anxiously at Mr. Dove to see whether he was annoyed. But Mr. Dove turned the incident cleverly to his advantage.

"Madam, you're wise! Next time you go out in the rain you must have an umbrella—and a stand to put it in!"

Everybody laughed except the dealers, who wanted to get on with the business, but a friendly, intimate atmosphere was established.

"Now, then, let's begin! This lady has opened the sale with a bid of half a crown for an article that cost £2/10/- and is as good as new! Now, then—"

"Three shillings," came a squeak from a wistful little face at the back.

"Three and six," said the stout lady.

Mr. Baldwin felt his blood coursing with excitement.

"Four shillings," returned the little lady.

"Four shillings," repeated Mr. Dove.

"Now we're beginning!"

He spoke too soon, for this optimistic prediction seemed to freeze the audience into silence.

"Come along now! Who's going to say 'Five shillings'?"

No one seemed inclined to say "Five shillings"—the umbrella stand looked as if it were shrivelling up in the hands of the green-aproned assistant.

"Four shillings? It's a sacrifice! Any advance on four shillings? Going, going—gone!"

Mr. Baldwin listened to the brief formalities with a heavy heart. The first wicket had fallen very cheaply.

Never had he and Edith passed a morning so filled with conflicting emotions and violent reactions; periods of bitter disappointment would give place to sudden, exultant surprises, which just as suddenly would fade in the face of a heart-rending sacrifice.

Mr. Baldwin's twelve-volume History of England, together with the Gems of International Literature in ten volumes, were knocked down for a shilling. The dining-room curtains fell for a half-a-crown; there were moments when the Baldwins felt as if it were a hideous nightmare.

They observed that it was when the Dealers stepped in for the larger stuff that fairly good prices were forthcoming. Three of them put up quite a struggle for the dining-room table, which was of old mahogany and well carved. It reached the highest price of the morning at £7/10/0 followed by the large bookcase at £2 and the walnut-wood china-cabinet in the drawing-room at £5/15/0.

Despite the disasters the figures steadily mounted up, and as Tom and Edith lunched in the kitchen they jotted up a total of £50/12/6, which covered eighty-nine lots, of the whole of the ground floor.

The afternoon was devoted to the bedrooms and a miscellany of kitchen utensils and box-room odds and ends. Three Dealers alone returned after lunch and they remained only to bid for the tallboy in the best bedroom.

Here was a genuine surprise, for although Mr. Baldwin had always thought a lot of it he was too disillusioned to expect the £10 that it fetched. The Dealers then departed,



leaving the beds and bedding to the women.

At five o'clock a weary, bloodshot-eyed Mr. Dove sat at the kitchen table and after much muttering and arguing with his clerk announced to Mr. Baldwin the satisfactory figure of £36.17/6.

The £36.17/6 which was over and above the first rough estimate disappeared immediately when Mr. Dove reminded them that commission and cost of catalogue had to be taken into account, but despite everything the result was not so bad.

Mr. Dove sat back and sighed—took out a cigarette and motioned to his clerk to go upstairs and supervise the removal of such furniture that was being taken away that evening. Heavy boots were thudding overhead on the bare boards of the dining-room; the Dealers' van had arrived before the Sale was over and a great deal of stuff had disappeared.

Edith had taken the precaution to make a thermos flask and Mr. Dove had a cup with the remaining slice of tart.

"Well," he said, "that's that." "I must say you did it wonderfully," remarked Mr. Baldwin. "It must be a strain to talk for five hours practically without stopping."

"It's not so much the talking," said Mr. Dove. "It's the concentration. You've got to know human nature—sum 'em up and lead 'em on—kissle their fancy—you know."

"It must be very interesting," said Edith.

Mr. Dove smiled and rose to take his leave. "Well, I hope we'll meet again. Let me know if I can ever do anything. We'll be sending you a cheque in a day or two, and the balance on the house ought to be along Thursday. Are you leaving now?"

"We're catching the 4.34 for Welden Valley; we've got half-an-hour before we go."

"I better take the keys with me, and you can just slam the front door when you go. Well, good-bye, Mrs. Baldwin—good-bye, sir. Good-bye to the new house!"

They followed him up the basement stairs and down the bare passage to the front door. The last of the Dealers' men was leaving with two of the drawing-room chairs; a woman was stacking a pile of blankets in a perambulator and another was leaning on the door of a small car, laying the three landscape pictures from the drawing-room on the back seat with a care that scarcely justified the three shillings and sixpence she had paid for each.

The clerk closed his greasy register and followed his master.

"There won't be anything else called for tonight," he said. "The rest'll be collected in the morning. Good night, sir."

"Good night," said Mr. Baldwin. He closed the door and was alone with Edith in Grasmere for the last time. "It's still ours until midnight," he said with a little twisted smile. "What a time it's been! We ought to sleep soundly tonight—at 'Greengates'."

"Peggy cooks up a supper that doesn't keep us at home," said Edith. They went over to close and lock the French windows and stood for a moment on the iron balcony. A few autumn leaves were still lying on the paths, for Mr. Baldwin had scarcely touched the garden in the past busy months. They reminded him of the trouble with Ada over the broom and he thought how long ago it seemed.

Against the lower wall lay the stack of leaves he had made in the autumn of the previous year; a little heap of embalmed sadness; a little monument

to a futile groping for a happiness that had sidestepped him and slipped away.

"We'd better go," he said, and as he turned from the garden the evening light caught the pale green shoots that were forming in the grained shingle beneath the wall.

They went up to their bedroom for the small bags that contained their needs for the previous night and as the clock was striking six they closed the door, pulled back the squeaking gate and turned towards the station.

**M**OST long-looked-forward-to events are worn out before they happen. The best times of all sweep down upon us so unexpectedly that anticipation gets no chance to water down the pleasure of reality; and they pass so swiftly that even reality never gets a chance to bore its ugly holes into the memories that remain.

Mr. Baldwin had no doubt looked forward a little too long to the thrill of slamming the front door of "Grasmere" for the last time. He had thought a little too much about the great moment when he would turn his back upon a faded, worn-out life and stride away through the spring evening towards gleaming horizons of unblistered varnish.

Everything happened perfectly to plan until the moment came for slamming the front door. The chaos of the auction had risen to his highest expectations; the departure of the bargain hunters and the last wistful half-hour with Edith in the old house had worked out entirely as he had pictured—and then, suddenly, everything went wrong.

Possibly he stared for a moment too long into the forlorn, umbrella-standless passage, for in that fatal moment of delay a torrent of memories poured from every nook and cranny of the sad old house and filled him with a sudden agony of remorse. The mad stupidity of it all rose up before him, and he realised, too late, what an unspeakable fool he had been.

A few days of trivial discontent had blinded him to a thousand solid, well-tested contentments that Grasmere stood for, and because his retirement had made his old home temporarily distasteful he had deliberately broken it to pieces and thrown it away!

The hollow echoing of that slamming door seemed to carry away with it everything that he could trust and rely upon. He had understood Grasmere and Grasmere had understood him. Every rattle of its windows had become the inconsequential chattering of an old, well-tried friend; every chair had patiently moulded itself to the whims of his joints; every stick of furniture, every cup and saucer and door knob had proved itself and would have stood by him to the end. And now he had destroyed it beyond hope of repair.

He had destroyed it in a fruitless gamble to cheat the years by discarding the trusted companions of a lifetime—by hobbling away to flirt with a new life that would have nothing in common with him!

The house in Welden Valley was young; it would be hard muscled, unsympathetic and impatient. He thought with a sudden revulsion of the hard, strange armchairs; the hard bright lights; the restive, untamed bed that would jerk him impatiently away from it and call for youth.

It had been his happy conviction that he would never feel old or out of sorts in a young, vigorous house like "Greengates." How true that was

—but how true with a terribly different meaning! It he were ill—he would never dare let young "Greengates" know about it; it would displease him for it and turn its back upon him. The old house had always understood; it had always soothed him in its pools of undemanding quietness.

Only the sight of Edith, waiting by the gate, gave him the strength to turn away and face the frightening, uncharted future. He could have rushed to the Estate Agent's office—begged for the key—slept upon the bare boards of "Grasmere" that night and begged Mr. Ranken-Dudley next morning to give him back his home at any cost.

He would have called from door to door upon the people who had taken his furniture and begged them to restore it to him. He would have made it his life's work to replace everything in "Grasmere" as he had known it and loved it.

But Edith was waiting. Nothing on earth could restore "Grasmere" to him now—no power on earth could replace it with all that it had once possessed for him.

"Come along," said Edith. He could see that she, too, was suffering, and he pitied her and despised himself for what he had done to her. Loose brass knobs on a bedstead had nothing to do with the comfort of one's bed. She walked in tight-lipped, stricken silence, like some old Flemish peasant woman driven from her home by war. She clutched her bag in a way that told him that she had smuggled some secret relics away.

In bitter truth they were refugees in that dark moment, refugees dragging themselves to the shelter of a strange, hard building in a strange, uncertain country.

"Two singles—Welden Valley," he mumbled through the ticket-office window.

Right back in the autumn, when first they had heard that "Greengates" would not be ready until the end of March, Edith had said: "The spring will be a splendid time to move." Her words came back to Mr. Baldwin as he sat waiting disconsolately for the train.

A few bright tufts of grass were sprouting from the borders of the gravelled platform and a half-starved, stunted chestnut tree beside the signal-box had gathered its frail resources to push forth a cluster of soft, sticky buds. Even here—in this drab old suburb, the spring found cracks to sprout through; out there in Welden Valley it would stretch its limbs in wild exultation.

He rose to meet the train with a desperate effort to be cheerful.

"Well, Edith," he said, "off at last!" "We'll come back one day and have a look round," said Edith, picking up her bag and following him to the bleak, empty train.

"Of course we will. Often. We'll walk down the old road and see what that fellow does to 'Grasmere'!"

"Good heavens, yes—it's not as if we're going across the world. I mean—supposing—supposing you didn't like Welden Valley—we could always buy the old house back."

"Of course we could," said Edith.

And suddenly the clouds began to clear. The train surged westward, and no passage of time will quench man's longing to cheat the darkness by roaming in the evening towards the setting sun. And Edith did an unexpected thing that warmed and brightened Mr. Baldwin's heart. She opened her bag and produced a flask of sherry.

"There was a good deal left in the bottle," she explained. "It seemed a pity to waste it."



"I should think so, indeed!" exclaimed Mr. Baldwin.

She had even brought something to drink in from a small glass that had saved itself from the auction by hiding in the bathroom cupboard behind a bottle of liniment.

Edith took her share; Mr. Baldwin sipped from the flask and gradually in all its glory, the journey that Mr. Baldwin had begun to dread burst into robust blossom. Not for the first time in history did a man feel his destiny reviving from an opportune glass of sherry upon an empty stomach.

His forebodings and remorse were so completely swept away that he felt well-nigh ashamed of himself. He sprawled out his legs and lit his pipe as the train gathered speed and rattled through the dusk.

"I was a fool just now, Edie. Did you see me standing at the front door after I'd slammed it?—pretending I was making sure that it was properly shut? I felt awful—I felt I couldn't bear it. I felt we'd made a horrible, shabby mistake!"

Edith nodded and sipped her sherry. "I know," she said.

"Of course I did. We shouldn't be human if we didn't. Standing there by the gate I thought of all the times I had gone in and out."

He nodded. "I felt I wanted to scream and hammer at the door—like a little boy shut out in the night. Do you know what I mean?"

"I'll pass off," said Edith.

"But it has passed off!" he cried.

"That's the extraordinary thing! Coming along to the station just now I felt we'd absolutely ruined our lives: I felt we were—sort of—roaming off into a kind of utter emptiness: isn't this sherry good?—It's so smooth. I mean, Edie—supposing we suddenly woke up and found we'd dreamt it all—and were just on our way back to the old house to carry on exactly the same—would you be glad?"

"No," said Edith in a firm voice.

The sherry had chased away the last remnants of the carriage window were running out through the open fields, and a light green down upon them gleamed in the sunset.

"Do you realise," he said, "we aren't suburban people—any longer!—we're country people!" He leaned back in his seat and folded his hands round the bowl of his pipe. "Supposing we'd finked all this?—we'd just be sitting back there."

The long day was beginning to tell upon them. They lapsed into silence and turned their faces to the window. After a while Mr. Baldwin said: "I still can't believe it: I shan't believe it's real till I wake up tomorrow in Welden Valley."

He puffed slowly at his pipe. What did it all mean?—what was it all leading them to? The future gleamed excitingly ahead, but it lay beyond a veil that no thought could penetrate.

New friends? What kind of friends?—new interests?—new pleasures?

"I hope Peggy goes all right to get dinner," remarked Edith. "I hope she understood it was tonight."

"I don't care," he said with a laugh that rang with bravado. "We'll cook it ourselves if she doesn't turn up!"

There were far more lights in Welden Valley than they had expected: at least a dozen houses were brightly illuminated and despite the late hour the Estate Office was still in full activity. Lights blazed from every window; they could see girls busily typing letters and men moving to and fro. It was reassuring and heartening, for they had expected a groping walk of half-a-mile through a darkened valley.

Their fears concerning the arrival

of Peggy were quickly set at rest, for as they reached the corner where the road turned into Welden Close they saw a gleaming square of light gleaming ahead of them.

"She's there," said Edith with a sigh of relief.

There was something symbolic in the picture that framed itself in the light from the kitchen window. As they drew near they could see Peggy at work by the table, standing sturdily against the clean, distempered wall. She was wearing a light blue uniform and her sleeves were rolled up nearly to her shoulders.

Gleaming pink arms moved over a white-topped table, a row of shining plates behind. There were none of the lurking shadows that haunted old Ada's kitchen in Brendesbury Terrace.

The green gates clicked behind them and the lantern light over the front door clicked on soon after they rang their bell. It seemed as if everything in "Greengates" was going to happen in a series of cheerful clicks.

Peggy threw open the door with surprising quickness. When you rang the bell at the old house there was almost time to go and buy a paper while Ada wheezed up the basement stairs.

"You've got here safely!" said Peggy—and a cheerful smile made up for the missing "ma'am."

"Yes," said Mrs. Baldwin, "quite safely."

They entered the little hall and stood for a moment as if expecting Peggy to tell them to wait while she rang the bell. It seemed as if everything in "Greengates" was going to happen in a series of cheerful clicks.

"Well," said Mr. Baldwin, "I suppose we'd better hang up our coats and hats."

He went to the downstairs cloak-room, touched the switch outside the door and plunged the hall into darkness. "You turn on the W.O. light from inside," explained Peggy. Mr. Baldwin fumbled in the dark—touched another switch and the light flicked up on the first floor landing.

"Takes a bit of getting used to," he muttered.

It was certainly a little puzzling, for the lighting at the old house had been on very simple lines. In "Greengates" you were able to perform complicated manoeuvres with a little practice.

When you wanted to go to bed, a switch in the hall turned on the light upstairs; having ascended you extinguished the downstairs light from a switch beside your bedroom door, and it seemed that almost any of the switches turned on or turned out the lantern light in the porch. By the time Mr. Baldwin had mastered these details he was beginning to feel at home.

IT transpired that Mrs. Chambers of the cake shop had come up to "Greengates" herself to help her niece prepare the dinner.

"Not," hastily added Peggy, "that I can't cook myself—only Auntie thought I might have trouble with the stiff tape and things."

"That was very good of Mrs. Chambers," said Edith. "Was everything all right?"

"Quite all right," said Peggy, "and Auntie took the liberty of making a steak pie instead of frying cutlets. She thought it'd be better in case anything delayed you."

Excellent," said Mr. Baldwin.

Peggy looked so new that it was hard to believe she had been alive for nineteen years; she looked as if she had been supplied with the house and polished to match it. There were no odds and ends about her; no spots or stains; her bright blue eyes matched the curtains; her bright pink face and

arms blended with the fresh, distempered walls.

She only appeared to wear three pieces of clothing: a blue cotton dress, a pair of distemper-colored stockings and brown shoes. Ada always looked as if you could undress her indefinitely without making much change in her appearance.

Mrs. Baldwin looked at the girl in wonder and a little sadness: no human being that walked about and touched things could remain in such spotless condition for so long.

She felt the same touch of sadness about the house itself, for it was too wonderful at present to be a genuine home. She and her husband were so crooked and time-worn in comparison that every movement—every step they took seemed to threaten destruction to their virgin surroundings.

Her umbrella and Tom's walking stick looked awful in that trim little weathered oak stand—like a battered old Punch and Judy from a worn-out side show peeping out of the Queen's doll's house. When Mr. Baldwin hung up his hat in the cloakroom it looked so dusty and greasy that he was ashamed of it and quickly hung his burberry beside it to lessen the comparison.

It was their first view of "Greengates" by artificial light. They would have declared it impossible for the little house to look better by night than by day, but it did: it eclipsed their wildest dreams.

The wrought-iron knocker on the front door was shaped like a miniature sailing ship; it would be a luxury in itself to lift that knocker; it would be worth going out for the pleasure of rapping out one's return upon it. The gleaming letter-box seemed to be crouching back in readiness to seize hold of letters like a playful puppy and swallow them into its little wire stomach.

When the door opened you came upon a tough little coconut mat let into the floor and flush with the carpet. All previous front-door mats that the Baldwins had known were cumbersome, contrary things that turned up their corners, stopped the door from opening and slid with the feet.

This little mat promised never to push itself forward; it gently seized one's feet, wiped them and passed them on without a murmur to smooth stretches of fawn, unpatterned carpet that flowed up the stairs, lapped against the walls, streamed into the various rooms and into the furthest corners without pause or break.

Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin went upstairs. Beginning at first had decided them upon doing away with the old-fashioned business of sharing a double bed; they were each to have their own bedroom now. Edith's looked out towards the sunset across Welden Close, Tom's towards where the dawn would come over the crest of the hill with the time-honored footpath winding up its side.

The beds were made with the new linen and blankets: their pyjamas lay folded beside the turned-back sheets; they flicked on the neat, shell-shaped reading lamps over the beds, and Mr. Baldwin gave a sudden queer little sigh.

"I don't know," he said, "it's all too good, well, too good to believe, isn't it?—I can't help feeling there's a catch in it. Can you believe it's all ours, Edie?"

Edith neither nodded nor shook her head.

"We're bound to find something that's

... that's not quite right," she said.

"I almost hope we do," replied Mr. Baldwin. "It looks too much like an Ideal Home at the Exhibition. I feel somebody's going to come along to-morrow and say the Show's over—and pull it all down."



Even the crackling fire in the dining-room looked almost too good to be warm. Dinner was set out upon a spotless cloth that gleamed as if it had been varnished; the new cutlery shone like silver; the new earthenware dinner-service looked too pure to take the pie that Edith cut and served.

They began the meal with a light-hearted gust of conversation, but gradually the deep quietness of Welden Close compelled their voices to undertones.

In Brondesbury Terrace it was never completely still: there were always the footsteps of a passer-by; the rumble of a lorry upon the main road; a neighbor calling in his car—a window closing—a clock chiming—a train hooting; there was always, even in the depths of the night, some tiny sound to break the quietness. Here, in Welden Valley, Tom and Edith sat and listened for the first time since their restless, lorryless childhood, to the compelling wonder of deep, unblemished silence.

The windows framed a clear-cut fathomless square of indigo night and Mr. Baldwin had the queer feeling of being upon a bright-lit stage—of being an actor in a dimly lit scene, that she dark night enwrapped a vast, silent audience that watched a man and his wife play out the first scene of a drama.

"We ought to sleep wonderfully here," he said, wiping his mouth on a new napkin that was so stiff and shiny that it passed across a crumb and left it on his lips.

"Wonderfully," he added, removing the crumb with his fingers.

Speak pie, brussels-sprouts, and mashed potatoes; steered past and a piece of Cheddar that looked so new and clean that it might have been a chunk cut bodily from the distempered wall.

Mr. Baldwin rose, and stared out of the window. Faintly he could see the great trunk of his elm, and gradually, as his eyes accustomed themselves to the darkness, the green gates outlined themselves.

A pang of loneliness came and he tried to shake it off. They seemed so utterly removed out here from the noisy, friendly world of an hour ago. There was not a light to be seen; the intense stillness was broken by a faint rustle in the tree, and in the silence that followed the little house seemed to sink another hundred fathoms into a soundless ocean.

Edith, by force of habit, was piling the dinner plates together—then she remembered there was no basement and no Ada—and pressed the bell.

"I don't see why we shouldn't have the light in the porch," said Mr. Baldwin.

"Certainly not," said Edith. "I thought it was on."

"I turned it off trying to turn on the light in the hall," he said.

It was pleasant to meet Peggy in the passage and to feel that there was life in the world besides their own. He switched on the outside light and returned to the dining-room. He felt like the Captain of a ship with broken engines—drifting in the black emptiness of an Atlantic night—turning on every light in the vain hope of companionship.

The porch lantern certainly improved things: it threw a pale, ghostly gleam across the little front garden, and he could pick out details here and there: a pile of stone slabs he had ordered for his crazy paving—a few tufts of grass that had escaped the builders' feet.

He felt restless, and angry with himself for feeling so. No fire could look more inviting than the one before him—no chairs more anxious to make his acquaintance and become friends. He ought now to settle down with

Edith opposite him—to spread his legs to the fire, light his pipe, and have a long talk with her over the absorbing things that had happened in this eventful day.

But he could think of no more to say at present; everything had been talked out; they had slept fitfully on the last night in the old house and they had been up before seven. Bed seemed the obvious thing—and yet he felt too restless for bed—too restless to talk. He told himself that it was natural to be restless on the first night in a new house—but it did not comfort him.

Supposing their lives were to go on exactly as before?—supposing, after all, they found no friends and no new interests—that everything turned out to be too young and out of key for them in Welden Valley? It was easy to be lonely in the old house, for most of their neighbors kept themselves to themselves. There were busy streets, cinema, endless shops to look into in Brondesbury—and a house that understood them. Supporting the people in Welden Valley labelled them as a couple of old burs with no claim upon the buoyant life of a new city!

What would happen if Edith and he were thrown back upon each other—night after night—month after month, in this utter, impenetrable stillness? He shivered—gave his head a little shake to clear it—and turned to the fire.

EDITH was stifling a yawn; she saw Tom looking at her and smiled apologetically. "I'd sleep anywhere tonight," she said. "I shall sleep like a log in that lovely new bedroom."

"You go to bed right away," he said. "I'll just get my hat and stick and go for a stroll." He took her arm and they went upstairs.

Edith's room looked rather cold and bare when the time came to think seriously of bed. The bed itself looked a little too self-centred and proud of itself to welcome a timid newcomer; it seemed to stick up its chest and stomach a little too high.

"What a charming room it is," said Mr. Baldwin. "You've planned it and thought it all out wonderfully."

It occurred to him for the first time what a struggle poor Edith must have had to keep her love of freshness alive at the old house. She had been a mere girl when they had furnished it over thirty years ago; she had thrown her youthful heart and soul into it—and then for over thirty years she had fought a heart-breaking battle against decay.

Now and then she had replaced old, worn-out things with tiny, hard won improvements that to his blindness he had scoffed at and fought against. For all those years her love of fresh, modern things had been stifled; one would have thought her desires would have paled and died; that when the time came to furnish "Greengates" her mind would have groped back feebly towards the old-fashioned things that she had understood as beautiful in years gone by.

But lo and behold!—when the chance came—when her desires and dreams would in the normal course of things have passed away, her genius had burst out as freshly as ever. How on earth had she kept up to date and understood so perfectly what would look right in a modern house?

"You've done it all beautifully," he said. "Everything's so exactly right."

She turned from her new dressing-table with its pivoting, frameless side mirror and low-built surfaces; she was laying out her toilet set—and her brushes and scent bottles looked a

little uneasy in their grand surroundings.

"You were the one that made it possible, Tom."

She smiled at him and he turned abruptly to the windows. He had a strong dislike for Darby and Joan scenes, and Edith, on occasions, was a little inclined to set the stage for them.

"Don't be silly. Anybody can do this with a little"—he nearly said "courage"—"energy."

"It wants more than . . . just energy."

There she was again!—she was always saying things that his own restraint so carefully avoided.

"Anyway," he said, "I couldn't have done it alone—so that's that! Sure you won't be lonely if I go out for a stroll?"

"Of course I won't, Peggy's here. But don't forget where the house is—it'd be silly to sleep out under a hedge on the first night!"

He kissed her. "You get along into bed. I shan't go far. I'll be back in ten minutes."

It did not seem correct to muffle himself in an overcoat now that he was a countryman. He took his hat and stick, thrust out his chest and strolled off into the night.

The lantern light over the door guided him to the gate, but he had to grope carefully over the rough grass verge that lay between his fence and the road. How extraordinarily dark and quiet it was out there!

When you went out in Brondesbury Terrace you would always see a bus or car slip by on the main road; there would always be someone walking nearby; a row of lived-in, lit-up houses opposite and a line of moth-infested lamp-posts. He found himself longing for the very things he had most longed to be rid of!

But here there was a cool, sweet country dampness in the air—a rustle of trees, and a smell of earth and stars—and yet, when he turned at a little distance to look at his new home he was filled with a strange melancholy.

Nothing could look more inviting than its clean-cut outline and its mellowed lights. It lacked nothing; it was a perfect home—but its very perfection called upon him to achieve the impossible; to live ravenously in the present and to blot out past and future.

Darkness to the front of him; darkness to the right of him—only to the left lay a few glimmering lights, and his lonely steps rang out on the concrete road that skirted Welden Close. As he passed the dim white pews that marked the empty building sites he began to wonder about the little pinked-in squares on the Estate Agent's map—sites that he understood had been sold.

He realised now that those colored squares had been decoys; that he had been duped into building out here in this wilderness away from the other people—that his house was to serve as a piece of ground bait for the convenience of the Estate Management. There were probably some awful, unforeseen drawbacks to Welden Close that everyone but he had realised. He had come to Welden Valley with a hunger for companionship and they had stuck him out here where nobody would ever come.

Oh, well—he was depressed, and that was the end of it. Maybe it would be better in the morning. He decided to walk as far as the village—to go slowly by the new houses in Cymbeline Road and see if he could spot through some of the various windows the people who were to be his neighbors. But never, probably, his friends. Then home to bed.



"Good evening!" came a voice through the darkness.

Mr. Baldwin glanced up with a start of surprise. He was passing the gate of the first new house and a rotund little man was standing there. He could not see the man's face—for the bright light over the front door revealed nothing but a stubby little silhouette in plus fours, smoking a cigar.

"Good evening," replied Mr. Baldwin, and he braced himself to walk on. He had always shrunk from people who were too suddenly familiar and his instinct told him to withdraw politely, and have a look at the little man by daylight before taking further steps. But second thoughts warned him that his whole future in Weiden Valley might depend upon what he did now.

If he were to walk straight by without a word this little man might tell the people of Weiden Valley that the newcomers at "Greengates" were too proud to know their neighbors. It would mean the very isolation he was dreading. He stopped dead, and said: "Lovely night!"

"It is indeed," replied the little man. "Are you the chap from 'Greengates'?"

Mr. Baldwin felt a twinge of disappointment. For general purposes he divided the human race into three broad categories:

- (a) Men who referred to their wives as "my wife."
- (b) Men who referred to them as "the wife."
- (c) Those who called them "my old lady."

He sadly placed his new acquaintance in category (b). He had hoped that no one in Weiden Valley would fall below (a). But what did it matter?—they were his new neighbors. He gave a friendly laugh.

"That's right," he said, "how did you know?"

"Sherlock Holmes!" replied the little man, jerking his thumb towards Weiden Close. "One house up the road; one man comes down the road!"

Mr. Baldwin responded in a spirit that surprised him.

"I'll have a shot now—and guess you live here!" he said, nodding towards the house that lay behind the little man.

The little man chuckled, and turned round to admit his new home in the light of Mr. Baldwin's pointing finger.

"I think it's a delightful house," said Mr. Baldwin. He and Edith had noticed it in particular as they had passed; it was a dignified, Regency sort of house with long windows and green shutters, with two neat little box trees in green tubs to either side of the door.

"Do you like it?" said the little man. "I'm not sure whether I don't prefer the Tudor ones myself—but the wife voted for a Regency one because of the high ceilings. You've got a nice place up there. I'd have built in Weiden Close myself if I'd known somebody else was going there."

Mr. Baldwin never knew quite how it happened, but suddenly he found himself strolling down the road with his new friend, and talking to him about Weiden Valley as if he had known him for a lifetime.

Such a thing would have been unthinkable in Brondesbury Terrace!—nobody would dream of picking up a total stranger and diving into a heart-to-heart talk about Brondesbury, because Brondesbury was not an absorbing subject to discuss: the building of it had been completed years ago and it was now a place that one merely lived in, in silence.

"Van Doon's name," said the little man. "Nothing Dutch about me though."

Whatever he was he proved himself a good and sympathetic listener. Mr. Baldwin forgot to look at the houses

he was passing; he found himself telling Mr. van Doon the whole story of his adventure; how he and his wife had known the Valley when it was a desolate place; how furious they had been when first they had seen its dawning development—he told Mr. van Doon about their unexpected visit to the Show House and all that it had led to. He even told him of his emotions at leaving his old house that afternoon.

"I know," said the little man. "We all take roots and it hurts to pull 'em up. But you're right in coming here; it's got a future, you know—a big future."

"What made you come?" asked Mr. Baldwin.

"Well—the Estate Manager's a pal of mine for one thing."

"Mr. Watkinson?"

"Yes—old Tom Watkinson. I knew him in Singapore."

"You've lived abroad?" enquired Mr. Baldwin with a new interest.

"Knocked about a good deal out East," said Mr. van Doon.

"Watkinson tells me he's going to build a house for himself in Weiden Close."

Mr. van Doon threw back his head and laughed.

"He always tells people that when he's selling 'em a house. Nothing like it for giving confidence!" He glanced quickly at Mr. Baldwin and added: "I don't mean he's dishonest—I reckon he really does believe he's going to build for himself—but when the time comes he always shuts down and clears off to the next place."

Mr. van Doon was interested in rubber. The whole of his youth, it seemed, had been spent upon remote plantations, but the time had come when the old country had called.

"There's always a time," he said, "when a man wants to sleep safely without a revolver under his pillow."

"That's true," said Mr. Baldwin. He would never have placed this comfortable, rather smug little man as an Empire Builder. They had reached the main road of the old village and he was able to see a little more of his new friend by the light of the street lamps. His face matched his body: it was clean-shaven, round and chubby. He had a snub nose and little twinkling grey eyes. He bore no trace of his life in the tropics.

IT was a splendid, starlit night. Mr. van Doon threw away his cigar stub and the two men paused to fill their pipes at an old hump-backed bridge that spanned a narrow stream. Beside them lay an inviting village inn and Mr. van Doon nodded towards it over the flames of his match.

"What about a night-cap?" he said.

The remark pulled Mr. Baldwin back to earth. In the excitement of this new and unexpected companionship he had almost forgotten Edith waiting anxiously in their lonely house for the sound of his returning footsteps.

"To tell you the truth," he stammered with an apologetic laugh, "I only meant to come out for five minutes. It's our first night, and naturally my wife..."

Mr. van Doon nodded understandingly, and finished what Mr. Baldwin was groping to say.

"I know," he said, "she's bound to feel lonesome. Mine did to begin with, but she's got a dog now. Well, pop in and have one another night. It's a decent little pub."

They left the bridge, and began to stroll back towards the valley. Mr. Baldwin puffed at his pipe. For the first time a silence fell between the two men, but it was an easy, sympathetic silence. There was something

unreal to Mr. Baldwin about this delightful, informal companionship. It had sprung from a darkness that had seemed so utterly empty.

No doubt it meant little to Mr. van Doon: he was probably accustomed to picking men out of the night and turning them into companions for a leisure hour—but it meant something to Mr. Baldwin that his new friend, with all his insight, would never have dreamed of it. It was his first real heart-to-heart talk to another man for over a year, and he was delighted to find that his powers of conversation had survived the weary months of loneliness.

At first he had talked stiffly and jerkily, as a parched man might sip the first drops of water from the pool of an oasis, but now he was talking freely and easily; he was aching to prolong the pleasure of it and suddenly he remembered that amongst the goods ordered from the village to stock their larder were a crate of ale, a bottle of whisky and some port.

They had reached the gate of Mr. van Doon's house, and Mr. Baldwin hesitatingly delayed him with a hand upon his arm.

"Why not stroll back to my house and have a spot with me there?"

"Good enough!" said Mr. van Doon, promptly reclosing his gate.

It may have been the decisive manner of his new friend's acceptance, but directly Mr. Baldwin had made the suggestion he regretted it. It would be magnificent to settle down by his own fireside for a lazy yarn with a friend, but what on earth would Edith think of it?—what on earth would she think of him, dragging a total stranger into the house at half-past-ten at night?—on their first night, when naturally she would want to enjoy "Greengates" alone with him?

They were in sight of the house now; he could see the light gleaming over the porch, and the subdued glow behind the bedroom curtains where Edith lay listening for his return. He wanted to get rid of Mr. van Doon: he wanted to go in by himself—to be alone with his wife—to sit at the foot of her bed and tell her about the first friend he had made in Weiden Valley.

He floundered for an excuse to put Mr. van Doon off until another night, but in place of the excuse came a sudden exultant joy that made him feel like taking his new friend by the arm and racing away with him up the dark hillside.

The futile suburban conventions that had plunged him into loneliness were gone for ever!—the Pioneers of Weiden Valley were bound in a common companionship, sharing the same ideals—the same absorbing interests. His house was open to every man and theirs to him.

As he closed the gate he looked up at Edith's window and thought of her lying there alone. He was longing to run upstairs and tell her that their days of lonely wayfaring were over; she knew nothing as yet of Mr. van Doon and the companionship that he symbolised. He threw the gate open with a flourish and stood aside for his friend to enter.

"I expect I can rout up something to christen the new house in," he said. The green gates clicked behind him. He opened the front door with his glistering new mortice key and flicked on the light in the dining-room. The fire had fallen to a peaceful glow and he was proud to ask a friend in without shame of disorder and shabbiness.

"Make yourself comfortable," he said. "I expect the maid's gone to bed—I'll just go out and see what I can find."

He did not go directly to the kitchen. He hastened upstairs to Edith's room.



She was reading in the luxury of the light above her bed. She lowered her book and looked at him enquiringly.

"Bed comfortable?" he enquired; "it looks fine."

"Lovely," said Edith. "Who's that downstairs?"

He looked up at her with a guilty chuckle.

"Why, Edie, it's funny. I was just strolling down the road, and I came across the chap who lives at the white house with the green shutters: the first house you come to, you know... at the corner, we had a walk together—and I asked him to drop in and have a drink. He's an awfully nice chap: he's asked us both to go and have tea and meet his wife."

The last remark was not strictly true, but he felt certain an invitation would come, and he was burning to draw Edith into it. She raised herself upon her elbow. "That's splendid!—what's he like?"

"Well," began Mr. Baldwin, "he's a short, cheery chap—lived abroad a lot... awfully interesting..."

But Edith pulled him up. "Don't leave him sitting there by himself! The drinks are in the larder. I expect he'd prefer whisky if he's lived abroad."

Mr. Baldwin got up, went to the head of the bed and kissed her. "You don't mind, Edie? I'm sure he won't stay long."

"Mind—It's splendid to meet somebody so quickly!"

He left her wondering what she was going to wear when they went to the van Doons' to tea. He hastened downstairs, found the whisky and a syphon, and hurried back to the dining-room.

Mr. van Doon was sitting well forward in his armchair: he was filling his pipe and his eyes were reflectively upon the fireplace.

"Who did your fireplace?" he enquired.

"Oh—the Estate people. D'you like it?"

Mr. van Doon nodded. "It's a nice job."

Mr. Baldwin tasted the first fruits of the house-proud: he felt that the fireplace in Mr. van Doon's dining-room was not quite so good—that Mr. van Doon was wishing he had a fireplace like the one in front of him...

"We nipped it out from a lot of designs," he said. "Say when."

"When," said Mr. van Doon, after a disturbingly long silence.

"Right up!" enquired Mr. Baldwin with the syphon.

"Half and half," said his friend.

"Well, chin-chin."

"Here's to Welden Valley!" said Mr. Baldwin.

"That's it!—Welden Valley—and let's hope our walls don't crack!"

Mr. Baldwin pulled out his pipe and pouch and sat opposite his friend. Here was perfect happiness: a fire—a home—a drink and a companion; and a wife tucked comfortably in bed upstairs: the things he had pictured so often had come true at last.

Mr. van Doon lounged back in his chair: he looked more at home in "Greengates" than his owner did at present.

"It's good to have a new house," he said. "It's all so clean and fresh—it's nice to know that nobody's ever died in any of the bedrooms!"

Mr. Baldwin lit his pipe and nodded in agreement. "I expect you've seen a lot of queer places," he said.

Mr. van Doon required little encouragement: he sank deeper and deeper into his armchair: his pipe sank deeper and deeper into his mouth: he balanced his glass on the arm and the chair, and talked.

He was a good talker: and Mr. Baldwin desired nothing more than to

lie back in his chair, to puff at his pipe and to listen.

It seemed that Mr. van Doon was born at Crofton and had owned one of the first motor-bicycles ever built. Inexhaustible had drawn his attention to the poor quality of the rubber then obtainable, and he had gone to the Malay States, opened up a rubber plantation and done a great deal to remedy things.

He told Mr. Baldwin how one reared the trees and tapped their juices: how one stored it and sold it. It all amazed Mr. Baldwin, and yet it seemed in perfect keeping with the free, devil-may-care life of the Pioneers of Welden Valley.

Welden Valley itself threatened to fall a bit flat after some of the lurid excursions into the backwoods, but Mr. van Doon's eyes lit up with a new fire when the conversation turned to the life that they had come to share together.

"What are our neighbors like?" enquired Mr. Baldwin. "D'you know much about them?"

Mr. van Doon knew all about them. He began with the house next to his own and worked methodically round the entire Estate. They were very much the kind of people Mr. Baldwin had expected. There appeared to be no outstanding personalities: no film actors or racing motorists, but there was something solid and satisfying about them. They were all people of good estate—living in their own houses in apparent ease.

There were no families living in basements: no tenements disguised as "maisonettes" as there were in Brondesbury Terrace: a dozen in all: a dozen pioneers, three or four young married couples, three or four men in middle life with families, three or four elderly retired couples and one old lady with a parrot and a girl companion.

"They sound quite interesting," said Mr. Baldwin.

WHILE his friend was talking, Mr. Baldwin had made up the fire, and a blue jet of gas was gushing through the black lumps in the grate: the smoke was surging up the chimney with a firm decision that promised complete relief from freak chimney-pots and unsightly cowl.

But these were things that lay only in his subconscious thoughts: it needed all his will power to keep his mind firmly planted in reality. Even if he had returned from his walk alone, and sat quietly for an hour by the dying fire with the silence of the valley for companionship, he would still have found it hard to associate himself with the Mr. Baldwin who had once worked for the Temple Insurance Office and lived in Brondesbury Terrace. The difficulty was twofold in the present circumstances.

His second and third whiskies were very modest compared with those he had given his friend, but how the room glowed with light!—it seemed to grow brighter and brighter until the very walls poured radiance from their glistening dismember. It rushed into his veins, and pulsed up to his temples, and overwhelmed him with a sense of unreality.

He kept thinking of a Mr. Baldwin sitting in an old dining-room at Brondesbury Terrace, watching the fire die out and listening to the footsteps passing by. He kept wondering who this was who sat by the fire in this strange new room that shouted with light, who listened to a tubby little man with a red face who talked and talked...

"They might be interesting," said the little tubby man, "if they were properly handled."

There? Who were they? With a struggle he pulled himself together. Of course, they were talking about their neighbors. The strange people who lived out there in the darkness were "they."

"How d'you mean?" His voice sounded as if it flew out of a loud speaker, and he cleared his throat gently to adjust things.

The little man in the opposite armchair removed the mouthpiece of his pipe and blew a spray of evil liquid into the fire.

"They might be very interesting—if somebody took the lead." The clock on the mantelpiece chimed the first quarter past eleven—the blue squirt of gas in the fireplace matured into a soft, leisurely flame. Mr. van Doon refilled his pipe, took a sip of whisky and edged his chair nearer to his host.

"If we act quickly—if we do it now—it can be done. If we wait until the place has grown too big, we've lost our chance."

Mr. Baldwin was no good at solving cryptograms. "What's the idea?" he said.

"It's just this," replied Mr. van Doon. "You were saying just now that nobody really cared about the place you come from—that people just lived in their houses and never did anything together. That's because they weren't interested in the place: it was built and finished years before they went there—there were no surprises left—nothing more to be built or developed. See what I mean?"

"Quite," said Mr. Baldwin, with a shrewd nod.

"Now think of Welden Valley: it's new, just beginning—and it depends upon us firstcomers what happens to it in the end. See what I mean?—we've got a duty and so far nobody's done anything about it. We're just going the same way as the people in their older places: we just dig our gardens and go shopping—say 'How d'you do?' over each other's gates and when the night comes we just shut ourselves up in our houses like a lot of hermits—everybody wishing somebody'd do something to bring us together and given us up! See?"

"Absolutely true," murmured Mr. Baldwin.

"Now's the time," said Mr. van Doon. He removed his pipe and waved it confidentially towards the window.

"D'you know that old barn over there?—a big rambling, tumbledown place that used to belong to Welden Farm? It would make a wonderful Club House if it was rebuilt and those flat meadows round it would make wonderful playing fields for tennis and bowls and cricket. It would pay the Estate hands down to take on the job. A big social and sports club would add pounds to the value of this place."

Mr. Baldwin sat up. Clubs had always interested him, but during the past years, in one way and another, he had dropped away from those he had belonged to.

"That's a great idea," he said. "Why not suggest it to the Estate?"

Mr. van Doon sat back in his chair and held up his hand for silence.

"I have," he said. "They'd start tomorrow—only they're afraid of it: afraid it might be a white elephant. They won't do it on their own responsibility, but they'd do it like a shot if they knew for certain that the people in Welden Valley would support it."

"Then why not get them to support it?"

"They wouldn't want asking twice: they'd jump at it." Mr. van Doon paused and firmly emphasized his final words: "But they must have a leader!"

Light dawned upon Mr. Baldwin: suddenly he realised what the little man was getting at. He wanted to be



the leader himself, but naturally he wanted someone else to suggest it.

"We want," continued Mr. van Doon, "a man to take the lead; a man who can get all these people together and put some pep into them. Once we've got these firstcomers bound together the whole thing would grow and grow. Every new arrival would join as a matter of course. We'd start with a dozen foundation members. In a year there'd be a hundred—in two years five hundred!—there wouldn't be a club like it in the whole of England."

"You're the man to do it," said Mr. Baldwin.

He was prepared for a smug smile and a little self-depreciation from Mr. van Doon; he prepared himself to persuade his friend and promise to canvass for support from their neighbors. As far as he was concerned he cared little who took the lead as long as a lead was taken. It thrilled him. It was a splendid scheme.

As one of the foundation members he might find himself upon the committee, with an engrossing hobby for the winter evening. It would give both Edith and himself the social life they longed for.

He was by no means sure that Mr. van Doon was the right man—but the right man very rarely did take on these jobs. They were nearly always run by the men who were not quite right—who were tolerated because of their energy—"I'm certain you're the man," he said.

And then a surprising thing happened. There was no smug smile or deprecating shake of the head. Mr. van Doon leant forward in his chair, pointed at Mr. Baldwin and said: "No. You're the man."

Mr. Baldwin could not reply: the surprise of it took his breath away. "It's good of you to say I'm the chap," continued Mr. van Doon, "but I'm not. I don't like fellows who run themselves down. I'm not doing that. I reckon I've got my good points like the rest of us—but my good points aren't the sort for taking on a social job like this. If you want a chap to settle a spot of bother with a bunch of niggers, good enough, but I'm a self-made man; rough diamond if you like—I don't mind saying it. I haven't got the education."

He paused abruptly—almost pugnaciously, and Mr. Baldwin felt embarrassed. Mr. van Doon had summed himself up with surprising insight. Mr. Baldwin admired him for it but it was hardly polite to express his admiration in the circumstances. But uppermost in his mind was the quite bewildering suggestion that he himself was the man to lead the people of Welden Valley.

A few hours ago, in the barren loneliness of his arrival he would have ignored the idea as a stupid joke. Who in his right mind would pick upon an elderly, retired insurance clerk, whose very friendliness gave pitiful evidence against his ability to lead and inspire his fellows?

But queer things had happened since his lonely arrival in Welden Valley—queer things that shone out of these raw distempered walls and clinking electric points that radiated from the strange little man in the arm chair opposite—that flowed out of the amber bottle on the gleaming table. He was a new man whom no one, not even himself, had a right to judge.

Leaders sprang from strange, unexpected corners. Little incidents flashed across his mind: incidents that led nowhere in themselves, but hinted at exciting things that might have happened.

His year as Treasurer of the Acacia Tennis Club had been a golden one. He had been popular in the office and the younger men especially had shown their respect for him. Many

a potentially great leader had passed their life obscurely—because the man and the hour had never synchronised. Was this the hour?—was he the man?

It was too bewildering to disentangle at a moment's notice. He could only shake his head with a weak smile and say—"Don't be silly. I'm not the man. I'm certain of that."

Mr. van Doon leant further forward in his chair. "D'you mind me being personal?" he said.

"Not a bit," replied Mr. Baldwin, feeling sure that something nice was going to happen.

"First of all," said Mr. van Doon, "You're the right age. Not too old and not too young. People would respect you, and that's essential. Then again, you've had a business training: you know how many shillings go to the pound. Then—if you don't mind me saying it—you're a man of the world. You've got education and polish. You've got enthusiasm—but I've seen enough of you to know you haven't got any silly, unpractical ideas. You'd always know what can be done and what can't—and if that isn't enough I'd like to know what is!"

**M**R. BALDWIN stirred in his chair: it was pleasant to listen to this remarkable analysis of his character—and yet he felt uneasy—at any moment he felt that Mr. van Doon might ask for an urgent loan. The queer little man was looking him straight in the face, with piercing, glistening grey eyes.

He began, not knowing in the slightest what he would have said if Mr. van Doon had not abruptly stopped him.

"Wait a minute! I know what you're going to say—you haven't got time: you don't want to push yourself forward. Maybe you're not even sure of yourself—but I tell you that you're the man for the job and I know the right man when I see him! Think of it as a duty!"

Mr. Baldwin leant forward and gulped his whisky. One of his ears cracked and began to buzz: it was as if a shaft of inspiration had pierced his brain.

He remembered how once, in an emergency, he had captained the office cricket team—how easily and smoothly he had moved his fieldsmen about—how effortlessly had been his duty in ushering the opposing team into the luncheon tent and seating them between his own men—he remembered two wide eyes in the darkness of the office stairs upon the night he had retired and a boyish voice that had said: "We shall miss you badly, sir!"

"I'd do anything I could to bring people together and make them happy," he said.

"Splendid!" said Mr. van Doon, slapping himself on the knee. "You'll always be behind, you—I shall back you up all I know."

"The power behind the throne!" said Mr. Baldwin, with a knowing little laugh.

Mr. van Doon knew his limitations but he intended to be in the fun all right.

"The power behind the throne!" he laughed. "It's going to be grand fun. It'll be a terrific success—a tremendous job, but a terrific success. We'll start tomorrow—I'll get a notice round asking everybody to a meeting at my house. I've got a nice big room that'll take fifty at a pinch. Even if they all come—if they all bring their wives—I'll only mean twenty-five. Twenty-five Pioneers!—I'll fix up cakes and coffee."

The clock began to chime and Mr. van Doon looked up in sudden dismay

"Is that clock right?—it can't be twelve!"

"It is twelve," said Mr. Baldwin, glancing at his watch.

His guest sprang to his feet, pulled his waistcoat down and brushed some ash away. "I shall catch it all right this time! The wife'll think I've been locked up!"

"Won't you have a spot before you go?" asked Mr. Baldwin.

"Not a drop!" said Mr. van Doon. "You're a nice one to lead me astray like this!" His face was very red, but despite three whiskies he was perfectly sober as far as Mr. Baldwin could see: he knocked his pipe out, dropped it in his pocket and walked briskly to the door.

"Well, it's been a wonderful evening," he said. "I shouldn't be surprised if we haven't made history to-night! I'll drop in tomorrow morning with that notice. I'd like you to see it before it goes out."

"Splendid!" said Mr. Baldwin. He opened the door and watched his new friend go briskly down the rough path.

"The gate opens inwards!"

"So does mine and every sensible one!" called back Mr. van Doon. "Chin, chin!"

"Chin, chin!" called Mr. Baldwin, feeling a little annoyed at ending the evening with a silly remark. He closed the door. In the sudden silence he became conscious of a queer, high-pitched singing in his ears: he felt about ten feet tall and the veins in the backs of his hands were so big that he could scarcely close his fingers. He stooped to push home the bright little brass bolt and his head billowed out like a balloon.

The pounding of a waterfall came to his ears. He stood upright and steadied himself against the wall. The house was ablaze with lights, and suddenly he realised what a firm hold he would have to take upon himself to turn them all off in their correct order.

He knew quite well what was wrong. He had had too much whisky. On the first night in his new home he was going to bed intoxicated—a thing that had not happened for years and years. He tried to think out what it all meant—but it was far beyond him—he was too bewildered to think—too bewildered to do anything but concentrate his whole will-power upon the glaring lights—

He reached out towards the three little switches in front of him and gave the lowest one a cautious twitch. The light in the outside porch went out and he found himself laughing out loud. A fluke!—a bull's eye first time!

Emboldened by his success he pushed up the second switch: something darkened above him but for the moment he could not locate it. Then he saw that the light upstairs had disappeared. That was wrong. He would need that when he went upstairs. He switched it on again—tried the upper switch and plunged the hall into darkness.

When he returned to the dining-room he was staggered by the reek of tobacco: it closed around him and made him feel a little sick. The fire was blazing brightly and unconcerned.

He took the tongs and groped amongst the red hot coals to remove the largest pieces and push them under the grate. But the heat pounded upon his face and he laid the tongs down with elaborate care to avoid a sound that might disturb Edith. What did the fire matter?—it was an absurd, old-maidish idea to rake it out every night before going to bed.

The grate was full of the white ash from their pipes. There were wet rings on the table from their glasses. Good old, hard-living Pioneers!—smok-



ing like furnaces and swilling liquor!—what a life!

He flicked out the light in the dining-room, but as he went to the stairs he saw that he had forgotten to turn off the kitchen light when he had gone to get the whisky.

What a gorgeous little kitchen it was!—clean as a new pin; flick!—it was gone—the house was in darkness save for the glimmer on the upstairs landing that would guide him to bed.

He stood in front of his bedroom mirror; he looked surprisingly—disappointingly normal. His hair was ruffled from lying back to his armchair and his face was a little more highly colored than usual—but his head was the correct size and his eyes looked clear and steady. It was probably excitement, and not the whisky that had given such a strange flavor of unreality to the evening. He stood by the window; a clean fresh breeze sprang gently over his face and cleared his thoughts.

The hill crest was faintly visible in the dark, starlit night. Somewhere up there the footpath spanned the crest—somewhere up there he and Edith had stood six months ago and looked down upon the valley in anger and dismay. From the same place they had looked down and even the first stack of bricks and scaffolding, the first vestiges of "Greengates" lying under the elm.

The call of a night bird and a rustle of wind came through the darkness. He felt very tired, but his mind was seething with the turmoil of the fantastic evening. Dictator of Welden Valley; leader of the people—leader of the Pioneer! It was too fantastic to believe. Even Mr. van Doon now seemed a shortly visitor without substance or future.

But Mr. van Doon had been real! Mr. van Doon was a shrewd judge of men; he had been genuine and sincere in everything he had said. The intense, husky little voice still rang in his ears: "You are the man!—You are the man to lead!"

He could still see the piercing little eyes. He went to the mirror. There was no doubt about it; in a certain light and at a certain angle strong, masterful lines formed round his jaw. He was seized with an overwhelming desire to go back to the dining-room; to take pen and paper and write a stirring manifesto to the People of Welden Valley.

But even as the desire came, an aching weariness crept over him. It was an exertion even to climb into the cool, unfamiliar, springy bed; to grope for the switch and to plunge the room into the fathomless darkness of the valley.

Between the small hours of three and four that morning Mr. Baldwin turned wearily upon his back and stared up at the dark ceiling of his bedroom. It was a new bedroom no longer; no room could have remained bright and spotless through such an eternity of darkness.

He felt that he had been lying in it for half his lifetime—that if he were to turn on the light he would find that the bright distemper of the walls had peeled and littered the floor with aged, discolored powder.

It was a cruel disappointment, for above all things he had wanted to wake fresh to his first morning in Welden Valley. At half past twelve he had struggled against sleep to draw the bedclothes around him. Five minutes later he had never been more starkly, startlingly awake in his life. A riotous crowd of thoughts began to race each other round and round his brain, missing the curves and bounding off the inside of his skull.

For a little while he tried to control them; to cut down their pace and to

sort them into order. He tried to begin his plans for the Welden Valley Club, but every time they began to take shape the tubby little body of Mr. van Doon came somersaulting round to send them flying in all directions.

It was Mr. van Doon who was keeping him awake. Mr. van Doon became a menace; he wanted to run Welden Valley with Mr. Baldwin as a spineless figure head; he wanted Mr. Baldwin to do exactly what he was told.

The whole thing was ridiculous. He turned irritably on to his side and tried to get rid of his lower arm by resting it upon the bedside table. It was ridiculous to begin worrying about a club that had not even been started. The grand Welden Valley scheme was probably stone dead, for Mr. van Doon would probably wake up in the morning and decide that it was not worth while.

**L**IFE in Welden Valley would probably turn out as Mr. Baldwin had expected all along—a quiet peaceful existence; a few good books, a few pleasant walks—vigorous hours in the garden, and perhaps a few quiet, pleasant friends.

But when he tried to persuade himself that a peaceful existence was all he needed there would come the fascinating vision of a clubroom filled with people—of a spacious office wherein he sat behind a huge desk covered with papers—of a green field speckled with white-clad tennis players—of people saying, "See Baldwin about it; Baldwin'll put it right."

It was useless to think any more about it until the morning. He summoned his will power, determined to lie perfectly still to close his eyes, make his mind a blank, and count slowly to a thousand. He had never been any good at counting imaginary sheep passing through an imaginary gate; he had never been able to conjure up a sufficiently clear picture of the gate to collect enough imaginary sheep to make the effort worth while.

He lay counting grimly, sticking out a finger to mark each hundred, but before the fingers of one hand were stretched, Mr. van Doon swept past and knocked them flying.

He tried an old trick that had sometimes induced sleep on nights of restlessness in the past: he began an imaginary journey from his home in Brondesbury Terrace to his office in the City; he walked to the station, visualising each landmark on the way; he climbed into the train and conjured up each detail of the panorama that flowed by the carriage window.

But he lost himself in the maze of chimney pots round Camden Town; the pillow was closing one of his nostrils and by the time he had rearranged it the imaginary train had arrived at the London terminus without him.

What did one do with one's arms upon a normal night in bed? Wherever he put them they either slipped down or tugged his pyjamas. One arm was a yard too long—the other a yard too short. He tried laying one across his chest, holding it in place with a thumb through the buttonhole of his pyjama coat, but this drew the coat so tightly under his arm that it threatened to burst his veins.

The human body seemed staped to meet every emergency of life with the one exception of sleep. He stretched an arm above his head and groped for something to hold on to. The old bed at "Grasmere" had comforting brass rails to grasp; this new bed had a smooth, heartless wooden back devoid of fingerhold.

It proved what he had suspected all along: it was the kind of bed that took

no further interest in a man from the moment its waning smile had rescued it from the showroom.

The whisky had parched his mouth and he would have given anything for a cool glass of fruit salts. He felt desperately lonely without Edith beside him. He began to feel that it was the room that was keeping him awake: its shadowy corners were so utterly barren—so strange—and still, and destitute of character; the room felt like a railway station waiting-room closed for the night.

With every restless movement he edged the pillow closer to the side of his bed; with monotonous regularity he raised himself upon his elbow and patted it back. The quiet was so intense that it seemed to be thinning the very air. He longed for the early sounds that used to keep him company on wakeful nights in the old house—the slow, lumbering luggage train that passed on the main line soon after four—the clock of St. Mary's Church that separated the black slabs of time into digestible slices.

Once he felt that sleep was coming at last; he scarcely dared to breathe lest he frightened it away, and then his chin irritated and the rubbing of it brought him wider awake than ever before.

Leader of Welden Valley! What a farce! A born leader would never have sprawled for five meaningless hours; he would have risen and spent the night upon his plans. He pictured van Doon, rolled up in his blankets like a fat cocoon . . . van Doon . . . cocoon . . .

Vaguely he heard someone moving nearby, but he was too tired to open his eyes. Barely and indistinctly he heard something chink down upon the bedside table, and then a voice cut through the clouds . . .

"Good morning, sir!"

It was Peggy; Peggy with his tea; Peggy in broad daylight. He jerked himself abruptly on to his elbow.

"Good morning, Peggy. What's the time?"

"Eight o'clock, sir . . . and two letters."

Peggy at least had survived the night's eternity with success. If anything she looked younger; her arms and face shone more brightly in the daylight than they had by night.

"Sleep well, Peggy?"

"Like a top, sir. Was you comfortable?"

"Yes, wonderfully."

And he meant it. As Peggy closed the door he closed his eyes—he forgave the pillow—he forgave the bed—he forgave everything in thanksgiving for the deep, dreamless sleep that had come so stealthily and unexpectedly in the end. The tea completed his recovery and he felt ready for anything.

The letters were only two circulars: one from a coal merchant and the other from a dairy; but they pleased him nevertheless. They seemed to announce his election to full membership of Welden Valley.

He jumped out of bed and went to the window. A pale spring sunlight lay upon the hillside; there was a smear of mist upon the grass and a tang in the air that smelt of September but tasted of spring. He threw open the window and performed the breathing exercises that he had promised himself ever since the evening when they had first seen their land.

The cool air bubbled in his lungs; the new life had begun. He threw on his dressing-gown and went to Edith's room.

Edith was sitting up in bed opening letters; she had beaten him easily for the bed was littered with envelopes. There were two from laundries.



three from dairies, two from butchers and a catalogue of wines.

"I didn't know there were so many tradespeople in the place." He sat on the foot of her bed. "How did you sleep, Edith?"

"Quite well," said Edith. But the rumpled bedclothes gave her away. "It's a beautiful bed, but . . ."

"I know," said Mr. Baldwin. "I didn't sleep much. It wants getting used to."

Edith was bursting with questions about Mr. van Doon. "I felt terribly curious. I kept wondering what you were talking about down there. I wanted to come down and listen outside the door."

He looked up in sudden concern. "Could you hear us?"

"The dining-room's right underneath."

"I'm terribly sorry . . ."

"Don't be silly—it didn't keep me awake. I wanted to keep awake. I lay here wondering what I'd wear when we go to tea with them today."

Mr. Baldwin felt awful. Drunkard and liar—that was what he had come to. He had kept her awake till midnight—and Mr. van Doon had never asked them to tea at all.

As a matter of fact, he stammered, "it wasn't definitely arranged—it was left indefinite."

"In that case we'll ask them to tea," said Edith. And Mr. Baldwin, humbled and grateful, went to his room and shaved.

Edith's curiosity about Mr. van Doon was very quickly satisfied. They had scarcely risen from breakfast before the gate clicked, and the little man himself came smartly up the path. Peggy was told to show him into the lounge and Mr. Baldwin's heart fell as he took Edith in to introduce her.

For Mr. van Doon, in the pale morning sunlight, was not nearly so impressive as he had been in the darkness, and in the mellow, forgiving glow of the dining-room on the previous night. His change of clothes had a good deal to do with it. The plaid trousers and tweed jacket had given him a breezy, open-air appearance, but the tight, natty little blue serge suit he was now wearing made him look like a retired publican, and the light brown, pointed shoes, together with the daffodil in his buttonhole, reminded Mr. Baldwin of White Monday at Brighton.

His face was the greatest disappointment: it had glowed so rosy under the lamplights of Welden High Street; it had been so chubby and Pickwickian in the light of the dining-room fire, but the rosy flush had now retired, and shut itself up in a multitude of tiny blue-tinted blood vessels around his cheekbones and nose.

But his buoyancy remained. He bounced up from the sofa with an "Ah!" of delight and took Edith's hand in both of his as if he had been longing to meet her for years.

"I expect you heard about the little bungee me and your hubby had last night?"

Edith laughed. "I heard you come in; I'm sorry I was in bed."

Mr. Baldwin did not like the way his visitor had jerked his head suggestively towards him and winked slyly at his wife; he did not like the word "bungee," or "hubby," very much—and began to realise the horrible mistake he had made. He should have known that the best kind of people are not picked up so casually in the night.

But Edith was charming to Mr. van Doon; whatever disappointment she felt after her husband's glowing reports was magnificently concealed; she drew him into a conversation about Welden Valley and the little man be-

gan to improve at once; he was so vitally interested in everything.

He flattered Edith about the taste she had displayed in decorating the lounge, and when he frankly admitted that he liked their fireplace better than his own, Mr. Baldwin began to like Mr. van Doon better than he did the blue suit and daffodil.

Van Doon got quickly to business. He produced a sheet of bright blue notepaper and handed it to his host.

"I scribbled this out when I got home last night. Do you think it'll do?"

Mr. Baldwin took the paper and read:

WELDEN VALLEY CLUB

A number of residents have expressed a desire for the establishment of a club to form the centre of the social and athletic life of Welden Valley.

I am writing at their request to invite you to an informal meeting at my house at 9 p.m. on Thursday next, the 6th inst., to discuss the project and consider ways and means. I sincerely hope you will be free that evening to attend.

Very truly yours,

PERCY VAN DOON.

"Brief and to the point, don't you think?" enquired Mr. van Doon.

"Perfectly," said Mr. Baldwin. There was a restraint about the notice that surprised him. He had feared a long and repellent manifesto. "I didn't know other people had asked for it?"

"They haven't," replied van Doon with a knowing smile, "but that's the way to get people keen. I'll copy that out and send everybody one tonight." He rose briskly and slipped the notice into his pocket. "Now what about strolling down and having a look at the old barn?"

Mr. Baldwin was torn between two earnest and conflicting desires: he was longing to get out into his new garden to get hold of his shining tools and begin work—but his eagerness for the club had returned; his spirits had risen and he was burning to see the barn that might soon become the centre of his new life.

"I ought to get busy on my garden," he began, but van Doon waved the garden vigorously aside.

"Gardens can be done any time—this club business is urgent!"

URGENT

Nothing in Mr. Baldwin's life had been urgent for close on two years. It was a splendid thing to be concerned in something urgent. He took his hat—gripped his walking-stick and set off with his new friend across the broad field in front of his house.

It was a morning to lift the heart and make the nostrils quiver. The spring lay crouching in the grass, the rising sun had given a plump sickness to the elm trunks, and their branches were gathering around them a pale green haze that shone against the sky. Some crows were bustling amongst the trees, and Mr. Baldwin felt the ground beneath him murmur with the tiny yawns of a million little creatures to whom the call had come.

Specks of color glinted in the bank beside the field path, and a cluster of snowdrops, weary little pioneers of spring, were trying to force their battles against the last rude blasts of winter by raising their tired, grimy faces to the sun.

Mr. Baldwin had yearned many a time in the past two years for a companion upon his walks, and now that a companion was beside him he would rather have been alone. He wanted to stride on and on, up hill, down dale—to realise that from now on—upon every morning until he died he would walk out of his house each morning and feel the crunch of virgin grass beneath his heels.

Van Doon seemed quite unaware of

the splendour surrounding him; he trotted along beside his tall companion, three steps to his two, and prattled incessantly about the new club—about subscriptions and hot water pipes and the crockery he would get from a friend in the wholesale line.

He discussed the club tie that they would have; Mr. Baldwin was fond of club ties, and he wished he could look forward a little more keenly to wearing the same colors as Mr. van Doon.

They came to a lane that curved away towards a dell of trees and presently van Doon stopped beside a ramshackle old gate and pointed up a cart track, grass-grown, and apparently disused for many years.

"There you are!" he said.

Mr. Baldwin's antiquarian instincts leapt within him as he approached the dark old building at the end of the lane. It was a magnificent old place—far and away beyond his expectations. He had pictured a gaunt wooden shed, devoid of character, but this was built of brick; narrow, wine-red Tudor bricks, with sturdy oak beams in its sides.

The tiles were of the kind that people snatched up and put on new, expensive houses, for no craftsman could imitate their mellowness, their fascinating twists and gentle, time-worn undulations.

What a place it was to confute with! He peered into its dark interior; massive beams spanned its roof—cobwebby, broken machinery littered its floor—but what a clubroom it would make! A great open hearth could be built in its far end—it was as big as an ordinary village hall and could be divided into several rooms. And the meadow beyond cried out for bowls and tennis and cricket.

"I'll want a lot done to it," said Mr. van Doon. "This barn can be patched up and made into a sort of entrance hall and the Club House Proper can be built on behind."

The hard little voice cut gratefully across Mr. Baldwin's thoughts; he was thinking of laborers, stacking those twilt corners with sweet hay; laborers in tattered kneebreeches, and greasy three cornered hats—with old leather jerkins they had smuggled home from the wars of Marlborough; very softly the ripples of history must have lapped against these walls.

"We must be careful not to damage this," he said.

Mr. van Doon looked at him with surprised round eyes. "Damage it! You'd want a clever man to damage it any more than what it is!"

"I mean," said Mr. Baldwin, "it's—a perfect piece of Tudor work; if we do anything to destroy its appearance we would be vandals."

"But it's only a barn! How can you have a Tudor barn?"

Mr. Baldwin made no reply. He stood gazing at the old place in silence.

"Let's go down and see if we can catch old Tom Watkinson at the Estate Office," suggested Mr. van Doon. "We'll have a talk about the whole thing."

The Estate Manager was talking to a self-conscious young couple at the door of his office, and while they stood waiting van Doon nudged Mr. Baldwin and whispered: "Two more members for the club!"

Mr. Baldwin heard the Manager say: "I assure you, sir—it's the only place to build—in fact, I'm going to build there myself." He saw the young man nervously stroke his little fair moustache and the girl clutching her bag; he knew what they were thinking; he hoped with all his heart that things would work out for them. He heard the young man murmur: "We'll—we'll drop you a line."

"Not later than Friday," warned Mr. Watkinson.



"Not later than Friday," said the young man.

He watched them walk away and he saw a queer little smile flicker round the corners of the Manager's mouth.

Mr. Watkinson did not appear to know Mr. van Doon quite so intimately as Mr. van Doon seemed to know Mr. Watkinson for while Mr. Watkinson said: "Good morning, Mr. van Doon," Mr. van Doon said, "Cheerio, Tom."

They were invited into the office, and the Manager listened attentively to all that Mr. van Doon had to say. He was silent for some time after the little man had finished.

"You mean," he said at last, "that you want the Estate to bear the cost of converting that barn and building a large club house on to it—and then to stand the risk?"

"There won't be any risk," exclaimed van Doon. "We'll rope in everybody to join—we'll have hundreds of members in a year or two."

As Mr. Baldwin sat listening in silence it was borne home to him that van Doon had not been altogether straightforward; he had given him distinctly to understand that the Estate Manager knew all about the scheme and was ready to support it if the residents were ready. It was now quite clear, from Mr. Watkinson's manner, that this was the first he had heard about it.

Mr. Watkinson began to grow impatient; he glanced at his watch. Mr. Baldwin rose to go, but van Doon sat stubbornly on.

"But Tom, old boy—can't you see what I'll mean to the Estate! The biggest and grandest club for miles around! People are going to fall over each other to build nearby to get the use of it! You'll not only get more for your land, but in a year or two you'll get a profit out of the club as well!"

"I know," said Mr. Watkinson. "I know."

"If I bring you a definite list of people who'll support it . . ."

"All right," interrupted the Estate Manager, "you have your meeting and see me again. I can't promise anything—but it's a good scheme and I'll see what I can do."

Mr. Baldwin made an elaborate excuse to get rid of his persistent little friend outside the Estate Office. He referred to numerous duties in the village and a meeting with his wife at the baker's shop. To his relief van Doon decided to go home and write out the notices for the meeting at once, and Mr. Baldwin walked away alone.

As he passed through the sleepy old village he caught a glimpse of the young couple sitting in the cake shop, drinking coffee. He felt he would like to go in and speak to them, to urge them on to encourage them to fight their difficulties and reap their reward. But at the moment he wanted to be alone to think. He crossed the little hump-backed bridge and followed the road up its winding course towards the bridge.

He wondered whether he was a bigger snob than he had suspected. The long and short of it was that van Doon was not good enough. Class counted for nothing and character everything: old Henslip, the Messenger at the office, was in conventional terms a common man, but he was a gentleman with whom Mr. Baldwin had many an evening played dominoes in the office basement. He would welcome Henslip as a member of the Welden Valley Club because he was modest and simple and unaffected and had a jolly sense of fun.

Mr. van Doon was far cleverer than Henslip; far better off and better educated, but Mr. Baldwin had no desire whatever to meet him socially; he was

perky—he was bogus; he was not genuine.

For two pins he would wash his hands of the whole scheme—but something inside him kept urging him to reflect and think; he reached the crest of the hill and followed a path that looked down upon the valley from the opposite side to his own.

It was while he stood there in the spring sunlight with the cluster of new houses beneath him, that he made his resolution. There would be a Welden Valley Club after all, but it would be the club of his own dreams and not the one that van Doon was thinking of. It would not be "the biggest, grandest club for miles around"; it would not have "hundreds of members in a few years' time"; there would be no "Club House Proper" built on to the barn.

That grand old barn alone would be the club; it would be restored with reverent care and its members would be few—just the best; the people that mattered—regardless of class or calling—and a small committee would select those members with jealous care.

Instinctively he knew that everything he desired would clash with van Doon. It was an unscrupulous thing to contemplate fighting the very man who had first suggested the scheme, but he was ready—and fiercely happy to be unscrupulous if it led to something fine.

A FEW days of residence at "Greengates" revealed to Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin several small but important adjustments that called for the attention of the builder. The plumbing appeared to be a little too delicately balanced, for if the front door was slammed too hard the lavatory flushed.

This was not a nice thing to happen each time a visitor arrived and left, but when Mr. Baldwin tried to demonstrate the trouble to the Estate Manager it naturally refused to happen: the alarm of the door was followed by the stony silence from the lavatory.

Another thing was due to pure carelessness upon the builder's part, for after Mr. Baldwin had run the hot tap in the cloakroom for half an hour in an attempt to get hot water he found that the hot water came immediately from the tap marked "cold."

He was sharply instructing the plumber to see that the pipes were immediately taken up and relaid correctly when the plumber somewhat insolently replied that it would be quicker to change the labels on the taps.

But these were trivial troubles that did little to mar the happiness of those first spring days in Welden Valley, for Tom and Edith Baldwin felt all the joy, and all the freshness, all that superb enhancement of self-respect that comes from association with things that are clean and new.

One felt a different kind of cleanliness after a bath at "Greengates"; it was almost like bathing in the open air. The bathroom in the old house had always been a musty, soul-destroying place. It faced the gaunt brick wall of the house opposite, and on the brightest day it was plunged in sullen, dark and brown shadow.

The window for as long as they could remember, had been jammed irrevocably open to the extent of two inches at the top; the room used to fill with steam, and a dismal rainbow would form around the choking gasping gas jets beneath the geyser.

You undressed furtively in your bedroom, and as you crept into the bath you felt that pneumonia germs sat waiting for you upon the soap-stained, brown painted ledges. You were oppressed with a sense of doom as you

pushed open the steam-slimed door and faced the black coldness of the passage.

But the morning sun shone into the "Greengates" bathroom: the glistening white tiles made one's body look pink and aglow with health; the window stood boldly open and you felt the country air brush softly upon your thighs. There was room to throw out the arms and do rhythmic breathing exercises—you could throw a towel around you, poke your head out of the window and see the hills and trees.

Mr. Baldwin felt almost ashamed to dig his spade into the strong turf behind the house; it was like digging a knife into a magnificent birthday cake and destroying its graceful lines. He felt reluctant to soil his beautiful new tools with their shining blades and spotted ashen handles.

But once he set aside these scruples he forgot everything in a mighty struggle against the vigorous, untamed turf that wrestled with him until great beads of perspiration plopped into the grass. Here at last was a garden worthy of a strong man's toil!

He taped out the position of paths and flower beds with mathematical precision: the great cubes of turf clung to the earth and came up with a fierce despairing hiss. He piled them together behind the brambles to weather down into top-soil for his beds and he struggled round the house with slabs of crazy paving. He mixed cement upon the box the beer came in and consolidated each foot of hard won land before adventuring further into the wilderness beyond.

By lunch-time upon the third morning, five yards of stone-flagged path stretched boldly away from the windows of the lounge. By lunch-time every day his vest and shirt were wringing with sweat and he would take a tepid bath and change his clothes before sitting down to the meal.

Edith spent adventurous mornings in the village: the finding of new shops had always amused her, and here was a paradise on earth—a place in which every shop was new to her. She discovered a greengrocer who grew his own vegetables, a dairymaid with his own cows, and a butcher with his own farm. Mr. Baldwin jocularly enquired whether the grocer tinned his own tongue.

All the tradesmen urged her to open an account and permit them to call for orders, but Edith was a wise old hand at shopping. She told them all that she had not decided which shops to give regular orders to. She kept them all on tiptoe and extracted remarkably good service from them as a result.

A pleasant surprise for Edith was the return of her afternoon nap that she had thought was gone for ever. It came about through Mr. Baldwin deciding upon a regular afternoon rest on his bed after such strenuous work in the garden, and so for an hour after lunch Edith was able to draw the blinds, plunge the drawing-room into twilight and recapture the happiest memory of years gone by.

The time between tea and dinner became for Mr. Baldwin the best of all. He had bought a large scale map of the country around Welden Valley; the sun now lingered until well past six, and when tea was over he would take his stick and pipe (but not his hat), and stride away upon a new exploration every evening.

Sometimes he would pass through the village and follow the valley until he came to the beech wood with its maze of moss-green paths; at other times he would climb the ridge and take the bridle path to Polegate Hill.

On a fallen tree he would sit and watch London slowly appear in the sky as the night clouds gathered up its glow. The set of the sun became the signal for return and the lights



were always beginning to pop up around him in Weelden Valley, as he came in sight of "Greengates."

Edith had been granted sole and exclusive rights over the rose beds in the front garden, and often as he returned in the twilight he would see her blue overalls figure moving to and fro amongst her first young trees. In the few minutes before dinner he would take the Naturalist's Diary that Edith had given him at Christmas and jot down a few notes for comparison next year—"First primrose in Harless Wood!" "Heard cuckoo by bridge on Thurston Road."

But there was a wistful quality in these days as well, for every evening brought them nearer to the night of the meeting at van Doon's to discuss the club, and something told Mr. Baldwin that these were to be the last days he would ever spend as a lonely man. On the coming Thursday he would meet all the people at present hidden from him behind the curtained windows of the houses in Cymbeline Road.

Some would emerge as friends—others as enemies: some would support his scheme for the club—others would support van Doon. Most nights on his return through the valley he would pass a stranger, and nod, and say "Good night." And always he would walk on with the thought—"Will he be with me—or with van Doon?" When Edith had gone to bed and he sat working at the dining-room table upon his plans, he would sometimes lay down his pen and wonder whether it was all worth while.

Life was very pleasant as it was: why throw himself into a struggle that was certain to lead to restless days and sleepless nights? Defeat would mean embitterment—victory would lead to countless work—appointment—the clashing of conflicting ambitions, jealousies and enmity. But he always picked up his pen again and went on with his plans.

One night van Doon dropped in to say that he had followed up his circular letter with a personal call upon everyone concerned, and he felt confident that there was great interest, and the meeting would be well attended.

Mr. Baldwin took the opportunity of telling van Doon his second thoughts about the club: that a small select club would be far better than a large, public place open to all. Van Doon had looked at him in surprise and said: "Oh, no—the Estate won't help unless everyone in the place can join."

And Mr. Baldwin quietly braced himself to fight.

The day of the meeting dawned with a strong northerly wind that fanned amongst the hedgerows and found a few weary, half-skeletoned leaves to play with. Toward evening there came dark clouds and a rusty, moorland rain that threw ominous shadows towards the critical events that lay so close at hand.

The Baldwins dined lightly upon fish to avoid risk of discomfort or drowsiness at the meeting, for, above all things, Mr. Baldwin desired a clear brain and sharp wits about him. He said little during the meal, and Edith made no attempt to force conversation.

Since tea-time he had been silently at work, and his final notes, neatly folded, lay ready upon the hallstand beside his hat. He was restless and ill at ease, and more than once glanced up at the windows as the gale spattered them with rain.

"This is certain to keep people away from the meeting," he said at last.

"Not if they're keen," replied Edith. "In any case nobody's got far to come."

At moments Mr. Baldwin weakly hoped that no one would be at the meeting at all; that the whole thing would be a fiasco. At the next moment he prayed for a room full of people;

to have as many there as possible to witness his fight against van Doon and the second-rate things that van Doon stood for.

It was less than a minute's walk to the van Doons' house, and, although the Baldwins ate slowly there was nearly half an hour to spare when the meal was over. They sat by the fire. They tried to talk of other things—of the garden; of the small library they had discovered in a room behind the newsagent's shop, from which they had that morning drawn two tattered but amusing books.

But the time lagged interminably, and Mr. Baldwin wondered how many other people were sitting by firesides, waiting for the time to go to the meeting.

"Whatever happens, we're going to meet our neighbors," said Edith. "There's bound to be some nice people amongst them. I like the look of that woman who goes by every morning with that big Alfordale dog. I hope she's there." She paused for a moment, then added: "Even if they don't support your plan, we shall still find some nice friends. Some are certain to be on your side."

Mr. Baldwin did not answer at once. He threw a log on the fire and said: "I hope it doesn't end in an awful row. Van Doon's the sort of chap who might easily turn nasty. It's a pity the meeting's in his house."

"There's no need for him to be unpleasant," replied Edith. "It's just your scheme against his. They'll discuss it and then vote. There's no reason for it to be personal."

But he shook his head. "It's extraordinary how easily things can get personal," he said. "Sometimes, I think I'm a fool to trouble about it. It'd be much more pleasant just to go to the meeting and enjoy listening—and just be one of the crowd. But you know how it is, Edie. The world's made up of unpleasant, pushing people, and nice, retiring people. If you mix the two kinds together in a club the nice ones always go, and the nasty ones remain."

**SLOWLY** Mr. Baldwin went on: "A club either keeps its social standing with a terrific struggle—or it goes down. No club ever goes up socially. I simply want a club for the nice people, that's all. I want all the rules to protect the nice ones and keep the nasty ones out. The nasty ones can go and have a club to themselves. We could have such a grand little club down in that old barn if we fight for it. Can't you picture it?"

"A jolly little clubroom for the winter! A tea garden for the summer, with just the people that matter; simple, interesting people!"

"I want to limit the membership to thirty men and thirty women. Half to be under thirty years of age, so that it'll never turn into an old fogey's club. The two things that make people proud of a club is a waiting list, and a rumor that the committee had refused to accept somebody."

"I think everybody will vote for that," said Edith, but Mr. Baldwin shook his head with a smile.

"Not everybody. Not the people who know they wouldn't be elected to a really exclusive club. Van Doon wants to lord it over a colossal club with hundreds of members. He wants quantity; quality doesn't appeal to him. But it does to me."

He rose from the fire and went upstairs to brush his hair and prepare for the battle. He was wearing a dark-grey suit that had been very little service since his city days. At ten minutes to nine they slammed the front door and heard the lavatory flush defiantly behind them.

"I shall insist upon the builder putting that right," he said. He spoke mechanically, neither in sorrow nor in anger. It was curious how remote and unimportant little "Greengates" had suddenly become, when a few days ago it had meant everything in the world. They pushed open their umbrellas and leant against the gale.

Mr. van Doon had specially invited the Baldwins to arrive early in order that they might say "How d'you do?" to his wife before the crowd arrived. Lights were shining from every window of the van Doon house as they walked up the path and stood between the snug little bay trees by the front door.

Mrs. Baldwin had caught sight of someone peering between the front-room curtains as they entered the gate, but the head had disappeared as if jerked by a string and there was a somewhat tedious, nerve-racking wait before the door was opened by a superior-looking maid in brown uniform.

The maid took their umbrellas away from them like a nurse removing unclean toys from little children. She was asking them for their names when Mr. van Doon himself emerged from a room and advanced with outstretched hand. He was wearing yet another suit: a double-breasted jacket, striped trousers and a large butterfly collar that made him look like a solicitor in a film. He was carrying a cigar that had obviously just been lit.

"Here we are. Come along in and meet the wife. I hope the rain doesn't keep 'em away. I'll get busy on the telephone if it does. I'll rout 'em out."

"We must have a good big meeting," replied Mr. Baldwin.

"We shall—even if I have to fetch 'em in the car."

Mrs. van Doon was tall and plump, with startling blue eyes and beads to match. She had bright pink cheeks, full red lips, and was in every way the kind of woman men married when they came home from Rubber Plantations.

"Perry's never stopped talking about you both," she exclaimed. "It's quite an occasion to meet you in the flesh."

This made Mr. Baldwin feel as if he had come without any trousers on, but he gallantly replied that he, too, had looked forward to their meeting with barely concealed impatience. The house was full of bright amber light and a smell of coffee. A startled, resentful cat peered round a corner and shot upstairs.

Mrs. van Doon took Edith by the arm and ushered her away to remove her coat. Mr. van Doon took Mr. Baldwin by the arm and led him into the large front room.

It was a very fine room, much bigger than the lounge at "Greengates." It was painted a cream color and the Regency mouldings on either side of the fireplace looked very impressive and correct. The designs embodied bundles of flutes done up in ribbon; small cherubs with trumpets and decorative wind instruments in profusion.

Everything was in such harmony and so cream colored that Mr. Baldwin could not help feeling it a pity that coal could not be secured in cream-colored knobs. It was an elegant, impressive room, but not the sort that one could do a piece of toast in. The wind boomed in the chimney and a scurry of rain came faintly from the night.

Mr. van Doon had spared no pains to get everything as perfect as possible for the meeting. A table had been placed at one end of the room, with two chairs behind it. Upon the table were pens and ink and a copy of "Whitaker's Almanack" for reference if needed.

The rest of the room had been arranged in a pleasant, informal circle



of chairs with a settee and two large armchairs by the fire.

Mr. Baldwin declared that it looked first-rate, but van Doon held up his hand and said: "Wait a minute!—have a look in here!" He led the way across the passage and threw open the dining-room door.

The sight took Mr. Baldwin's breath away. He had never seen such a reckless display of refreshments. There were plates of sandwiches of every type from crust to lobster; sausage rolls, eclairs, large cream buns—slips of toast with sardines on them and a large purple jelly.

Upon the sideboard, glowing in the amber light and catching dancing reflections from the fire, stood a small battalion of bottles and glasses; from home-made lemonade to a crusty-looking bottle of port and a large jug of yellow fluid with fruit floating in it or lying on the bottom, according to the kind of fruit it was.

Mr. Baldwin looked round in astonishment. It must have cost pounds. And as he looked, he felt all his fine carefully-prepared plans crumbling to pieces. No one who came to the meeting could do anything but support a man who entertained them like this. "There's just one point that's worrying me," said van Doon. "We must have a Chairman for the meeting."

"You must be in the Chair," said Mr. Baldwin. "I shall propose you myself."

"I mean," went on the little man, "just because it happens to be my house I don't want to."

"Nonsense," broke in Mr. Baldwin, "you planned the meeting; it's your idea."

"All right. If you think so. But you might slip the word to someone else to propose me. You see, if you propose me and I propose you as Secretary, I'll look a bit fishy—a put-up show—if you see what I mean."

"Quite," said Mr. Baldwin. "I'll mention it to somebody. And then you'll propose me as Secretary before the meeting starts? We must have proper notes taken from the beginning."

"Certainly I shall. Directly I'm in the Chair," assured van Doon.

Mr. Baldwin felt relieved. He also felt that he had played a slightly dirty trick: he wanted to be safely elected as Secretary before he declared himself against van Doon's plan. If the election were to come afterwards van Doon might have second thoughts. . . . he might even contrive to be elected Secretary himself—and that would wreck every remaining hope in Mr. Baldwin's heart.

But he quickly shook off his scruples: he knew that he would have to be unscrupulous to succeed; he was prepared to ride rough-shod over everyone—over van Doon himself if necessary.

He waved his hand towards the table with a laugh.

"You ought to have had some crackers—then we could have finished the meeting blowing whistles in paper hats."

Van Doon did not laugh very much at this joke. Mr. Baldwin felt he had made a tactless remark, that he had belittled van Doon's hospitality. He was just beginning to put himself right when the front-door bell rang and the little man bristled into activity.

"Come along!—we'll meet them in the lounge!"

They were just in time to regain the lounge before the door reopened and the maid announced: "Mr. Forbes Whithead!"

"Ah!" said van Doon. "The very man we most wanted! I'm glad you got down in time!"

"I made time," said Mr. Forbes Whithead. "Just scrambled into the seven-fifteen."

Mr. Whithead was a sturdy, thick-set man. He was very bald but his keen, aquiline face and piercing eyes made up for his lack of hair and stamped him as a young and vigorous personality. He was dressed in the conventional black coat and striped trousers of the City, but while Mr. van Doon had obviously dressed in the same style for this special occasion, Mr. Baldwin knew that Forbes Whithead was dressed this way through lack of time to change into something easier. Van Doon was bogus; Whithead was real.

"You two ought to find plenty to talk about!" said van Doon as he introduced them. "Two City men!"

THE new-comer turned a pair of such penetrating eyes upon Mr. Baldwin that they would have been disconcerting without the broad, humorous smile beneath them.

"Were you on the seven-fifteen?" enquired Mr. Whithead.

"No," replied Mr. Baldwin. "I've retired."

"Lucky man!"

Mr. Baldwin discovered that his new friend was a member of the Stock Exchange and he felt a little awed. The aloof, top-hatted men who came and went through Throgmorton Street and disappeared through the mysterious forbidden door of "The House" were rather a class apart from the lesser, bowler-hatted men of the Banks and Insurance Offices. But the common interests of Welden Valley soon broke down the barriers, and in a few minutes Mr. Baldwin found himself in a deep and surprising conversation about swallows, cuckoos and migratory birds in general.

Birds were Mr. Whithead's hobby, and he was literally bursting with them. In five minutes he told Mr. Baldwin more about them than he had learned in sixty years. He promised to take Mr. Baldwin out one day and show him how to observe nature unobserved: he was just explaining how it was impossible to lie in secret within six feet of a thrush's nest when van Doon broke in to introduce a talkative white-haired lady named Mrs. McKinney.

Mr. Whithead escaped, but Mrs. McKinney hemmed Mr. Baldwin into a corner and began in a rapid high-pitched voice to tell him everything she knew about everything.

Mr. Whithead had interested him so deeply that he had quite failed to notice how quickly the room was filling with people. There were at least eight or nine already, and as he absently nodded and listened to Mrs. McKinney he keenly watched the door over her shoulder as further people arrived.

He was glad to see Edith sitting on the couch in conversation with a pleasant lady in horn-rimmed glasses, and he enviously watched Mr. Whithead discussing motor-cars with a fat man as vigorously as he had discussed birds with him.

Mr. and Mrs. van Doon bustled to and fro, excited and happy that everybody was finding so much to say. The room was throbbing with conversation; the bell kept ringing. Somebody said: "The rain's stopped; the moon's out!" and Mr. Baldwin nervously felt for his notes in his waistcoat pocket. The babble was so intense that he began to feel light-headed; it was a long time since he had been in a room with so many people, and it frightened him to think that in a little while they would all be silent, listening to his speech.

Mrs. McKinney prattled on about how nice new houses were, and what a treat it was to live in the country, and had Mr. Baldwin noticed that the

spring was coming. He glanced furtively at his watch and saw that it was ten past nine; he noticed with regret that the buzz of conversation had begun to die away, that some of the guests were glancing around with a look of expectancy.

He caught Mr. van Doon's eye through the crowd and they exchanged a nod of agreement. The little man made his way to the table and tapped upon it with a pencil. There was no response and he tapped more loudly. "Ladies and gentlemen!" he called out.

There was instant silence, except from an old lady who was apparently deaf, who went on talking in a shrill, solitary voice until her listener gesticulated her into silence.

"Ladies and gentlemen," repeated Mr. van Doon, "shall we begin?"

There was some pointless but friendly laughter, one or two "hear, hear!"s, and then silence. Everyone was looking towards van Doon; van Doon stood by a table in expectancy, and with a thud of the heart Mr. Baldwin realised that he had forgotten to tell anybody to propose van Doon as chairman. He was upon the point of doing it himself when Mr. Whithead called out: "We must have a chairman to keep us in order! May I propose our host?"

This was carried with acclaim, and Mr. van Doon edged round behind the table with a bashful smile.

"Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. This is rather sudden, but I'll do my best. Now, will you all make yourselves comfortable? I hope there's enough seats. I wouldn't like anybody to come to my house and sit on the floor!"

There was further laughter at this remark, and Mr. Baldwin could not help feeling what a heaven-sent opportunity a meeting of this kind offered to a man who never managed to raise a laugh at anything he ever said at any other time in his life.

There seemed to be far fewer people when everyone was seated. There appeared to have been at least fifty when they were all standing up—but now, from his chair beneath the window, Mr. Baldwin was disappointed at counting only seventeen.

But they were pleasant, friendly, well-to-do-looking people, much better than the sort one saw passing the old house in Bronesbury. There was one exceedingly aristocratic old gentleman with a grey, military moustache and a nice old aristocratic wife—two young, obviously newly married couples—two single, old ladies—a stout, commonplace man in pince-nez, a shrivelled little man in a high collar, and a few people behind whom he could not clearly see.

He was pleased to note that Edith had retained her seat on the sofa beside the lady in the horn-rimmed glasses; she looked flushed and happy, and threw him an encouraging smile.

Van Doon looked as if he had grown six inches behind the table puffing with circumstance. "I wonder if anyone will feel a draught if we just open the window a little at the top? I'm afraid it'll get a little too close."

There were cries of "Yes, let's!" and the meeting was entirely upset while all the men got up and looked for the windows behind the numerous curtains. Mr. van Doon called out: "No, please! The maids can do it. Let the maids come in and do it!" But the resourceful Mr. Whithead had already opened a window and was inquiring of a lady beneath whether she would feel it.

All the men got up again and offered to change seats if she felt any inconvenience. The maids arrived and were sent away—and Mr. Baldwin felt certain that the whole window business had been manoeuvred to display the



fact that van Doon's domestic staff was in the plural.

"Now, ladies and gentlemen, I'm sure we all want a businesslike meeting, and I suggest we begin by appointing a secretary to keep proper records."

There was a murmur of approval: Mr. Baldwin's heart began to thump and his tongue grew dry.

"I had a word just now," went on the little man, "with my friend Mr. Baldwin, and he expressed his willingness to act if that is your desire."

There was another murmur followed by a ghostly silence. Mr. Baldwin's heart was thudding like a sledgehammer. The silence continued; he saw people exchange glances, raise their eyebrows, and shake their heads—obviously indicating that they didn't know who Mr. Baldwin was. After an eternity, van Doon remarked in a drawing voice: "Will anybody propose Mr. Baldwin?"

Mr. Baldwin felt suddenly humiliated and angry; he felt that van Doon had deliberately staged this drawn-out delay in order to belittle him. Once more the resourceful Mr. Whithead jumped up: "I'd like to propose Mr. Baldwin."

"Proposed by Mr. Whithead," drawled out van Doon. "Will somebody second that proposal?"

Again there came the awful silence. Were the whole lot dumb? Had only Whithead a voice?

"I second Mr. Baldwin," came a thin, nervous voice from the back. It came from one of the young, newly married men. Mr. Baldwin noted him and vowed eternal friendship.

"Mr. Baldwin is proposed by Mr. Whithead and seconded by Mr. Fitzgerald. Any other nominations?"

This time the silence was correct and comforting.

"Those in favor?"

Some hands went up—then several more.

"Carried," remarked van Doon in a voice that sounded full of relief after a ticklish and difficult business. "Will you sit up here, Mr. Baldwin?—there's plenty of paper and ink?"

There was a little applause and some sympathetic laughter as Mr. Baldwin arose and went to his seat beside van Doon. He felt that he had made a sorry and undignified entrance to public life and he knew that van Doon had deliberately made his election seem futile and unimportant.

He felt like a beaten man; he had no chance against the fates that were fighting upon the side of van Doon to-night: van Doon was in his own house; he was host and chairman; everyone in the room except Mr. Whithead seemed dumb; they would follow van Doon like sheep. . . . he drew the paper towards him, took out his fountain-pen and prepared with a heavy heart to make notes of what transpired as the little man got up to speak.

Van Doon talked for half an hour and Mr. Baldwin had to admit that he talked well. What he said was no doubt well prepared and his vitality gave a rough eloquence to his words that deeply impressed his listeners.

He began by ridiculing the feeble, squabble-ridden, poverty-stricken little clubs that usually grew up like mushrooms in every new residential area—"They are feeble because they devote themselves to one solitary game of interest which cannot possibly attract sufficient people to make each pay its way. Jealousy prevents them from combining into one strong club embracing every sport. They grow like mushrooms and shrivel up like mushrooms."

"But we people of Welden Valley have got a unique opportunity—and we shall be lunatics if we don't take advantage of it!"

"We have a far-sighted, intelligent

Estate Management alive to the golden possibilities of one really fine, centralised club as the hub of the social life of the Estate. The Estate themselves will find the money; they will build the club; they will relieve us of all the dull, back-breaking work of founding it. We can be certain of it being a fine, impressive building, because the more attractive they make it, the more people will come and live here—the more people will buy their land—and pay them to build their houses."

"From their point of view it is a great business proposition because it will double the value of the land they have to sell; from our point of view it is something for nothing! We have already bought our land and houses—it will only be the newcomers who have to pay more. The subscription will be moderate; the Estate will not attempt to make money out of the club itself; they will probably lose by it—but they will gain ten times their loss in other directions!"

"All they need is an assurance from us—the pioneer residents—that we shall give our whole-hearted support and confidence! Let us send them a message of support tonight and I guarantee they will begin the club tomorrow!"

There was great applause when he sat down, and enough stamping of feet to set the purple jelly wobbling in the dining-room. During the ovation van Doon leant over towards Mr. Baldwin with glistering eyes and said: "How was that?"

"Magnificent," replied Mr. Baldwin with all the heartiness that he could muster. "I wish I could speak like that."

"I'm sure you can," replied van Doon with a sympathy in his voice that said: "I know you can't. It was, in fact, a considerable feat of memory, for he repeated almost everything that Mr. van Doon had said; he then said a good deal of his own and when finally he sat down one gathered that he was in favor."

The stout man in pince-nez got up without delay. He heartily congratulated Mr. van Doon upon his very excellent speech and proceeded to make one himself that he obviously considered to be still more excellent. It was, in fact, a considerable feat of memory, for he repeated almost everything that Mr. van Doon had said; he then said a good deal of his own and when finally he sat down one gathered that he was in favor.

MRS. MCKINNEY then got up and strongly advocated the encouragement of archery. At some length she described the attempts made by her late husband and herself to install an enthusiasm for this royal and ancient game into the residents of Wimbledon Park, and ascribed their failure to numerous reasons, the majority of which were not quite clear to the audience.

She received a sympathetic ovation when she took her seat, and continued to enlarge upon her idea in a whisper to an uncomfortable-looking lady next to her who kept nodding and rolling her eyes.

The next speaker was the shrivelled little man in a high collar who arose from the obscurity of a small seat in a corner.

"Dentist," muttered van Doon to Mr. Baldwin.

"May I ask," began the little man in a thin, apologetic voice, whether the club committee will be composed of residents—whether we, in this room, shall be eligible to serve on it?"

"Certainly," replied van Doon. "The Estate Management will expect us to elect our own committee."

"What," asked the dentist, "will be our power if the Estate are, in fact, Owners and Managers of the club?"

Mr. Baldwin felt a sudden glow of pleasure; here was the first opposition! the little dentist was on his side; his friend. For the first time van Doon showed hesitancy as he arose to reply. "I've already said that the residents will themselves manage the club."

"I know—but what power will they possess if they do not control the one vital element in a club—its finances?"

"I've always imagined that members are the one vital element," retorted Mr. van Doon. He smiled with a return of his self-assurance when some laughter followed this reply—but Mr. Baldwin noticed that the laughter was by no means general.

"Another point," pursued the dentist. "A committee protects a club by refusing membership to those whom the outsider undesirable. If the estate sells land to a man at a high price because they have provided an excellent club nearby, what will the estate say if the committee refuses membership to that man—and what will the man say to the estate when he realises that he has paid a high price under false pretences?"

"I assume," replied van Doon, "that all of us who possess the financial standing and discrimination to live in Welden Valley would be desirable members."

His face was flushed, and he was fidgeting angrily with a piece of blotting-paper. There was an attempt at sarcasm in his answer. An attempt to make it seem as if the dentist were casting reflections upon those in the room. But his efforts misfired, and there was no response from the audience.

All eyes were now turned towards the fragile little dentist, standing against the wall, fingering his watch-chain. There was a tenseless in the room that comes from an audience hoping to witness an exciting little breeze.

"I see," replied the dentist. "In other words, the residents who form the committee will be forced to accept, even against their will, everyone to whom the estate sells a house?"

"I've already said," snapped Mr. van Doon, "the estate are very particular about the people they sell houses to."

"Thank you," said the little man, disappearing from view upon his seat on the Regency coal-scuttle. There was no applause, but a murmur came that was far more eloquent than hand-clapping.

The stout man in pince-nez stood up again. He was pugnacious, and a little unpleasant. He said that it was nothing short of defamation of character and a criminal offence for a smug, self-righteous committee to exclude a man from a club he wished to join. Some men had suffered all their lives from the venom and spite of people who got on to committees and set themselves up as judges of other men's characters. All committees turned into little cliques who took too much to themselves, and it would be an excellent thing if there were a power above them to let them know they weren't everybody.

He enlarged upon this theme to such an extent, and with such venom that it became evident to everybody that at some time in his life he had badly wanted to be on a committee and failed to achieve it.

There was no applause at all when the stout man sat down. If he had intended his outburst as support for van Doon's scheme it disastrously failed. The little dentist had pointed out possible weaknesses. The stout man had proved conclusively that the dentist's theories were correct.

In the space of ten minutes the atmosphere of the meeting had undergone an astonishing change. Until the little dentist had spoken, it had been the



a friendly rather aimless little tea-party. Now the air seemed charged with electricity. At any moment a careless word might cause a violent storm. People were speaking in undertones—nodding and shaking their heads.

They seemed to be realising for the first time that they were dealing with a far bigger issue than they had anticipated, that the club was something that might profoundly affect the future of Weldon Valley and all who lived in it. The smile had disappeared from van Doon's face. He sat back in his chair, obviously annoyed at the unofficial discussions proceeding in every corner of the room.

Mr. Baldwin realised that his turn had come at last. He had purposely refrained from speaking until he had been able to gauge the feeling of the meeting. So far van Doon alone had spoken constructively—and the little dentist in a few penetrating questions had brought van Doon's plan to the brink of destruction. Another attack might end everything, and he saw now that he alone was ready with a constructive alternative that would not only save the club, but save van Doon—for suddenly and unaccountably he felt sorry for van Doon. The stout man in pince-nez, in an attempt to support him, had done the little man a hideous disservice that he did not deserve.

He stood up, cleared his throat, and took a firm grip of his water-chairs. Van Doon looked up in surprise and tapped the table for order.

"Is it not, gentlemen, secretary allowed to open his mouth?" began Mr. Baldwin.

There were cries of "Yes!—No!"—"Sit down!"—"Go on!" and a lot of friendly laughter.

Mr. Baldwin was delighted to find that his unprepared opening had struck the right note. He had planned to begin with a graceful compliment to the chairman, but these good-natured interruptions were more helpful than an ocean of polite applause. They eased the tension, broke down the barriers between him and his audience, and all his nervousness had disappeared when silence permitted him to proceed.

"The rottenest thing in the world," he said, "is destructive criticism. To attempt to pull down and destroy the carefully considered proposals of our chairman would be worthy of contempt, and I hope that nothing I say will bring that charge upon me. When the Weldon Valley Club is a hundred years old I hope it will be clearly remembered that the man whose energy and enthusiasm inspired it is the man sitting beside me to-night."

He bowed slightly towards Mr. van Doon amidst appreciative applause, and he was happy to see the smile return to the little man's face.

"I support his plans with admiration and enthusiasm. It was a splendid proposal of his that one strong, centralised club should take the place of half a dozen little ones. I disagree with him upon one point only. I disagree with the estate having any interest or control whatsoever. I believe that would ruin its spirit and destroy its character. It would also deprive us of the joy of scheming it out and fighting for it, and creating something with our own hands that we can be justly proud of."

"I know that the Estate could build a far grander place than we can hope for by our own efforts—but don't you think we shall enjoy it more if it is a little less grand and a little more our own?"

"Let us go to the Estate and say: 'Give us that barn and meadow upon a yearly rental and leave us to do the

rest.' I want all of you to go down and see that barn and picture what we can make of it: it's too fine and old, and unspoiled to be vandalised into a large modern club. If we make this club with our own hands we shall fight each other—clash our characters one against the other—face disappointment and struggle through to far more enduring friendships than we shall ever find by walking like pampered guests into a glorified hotel—built and managed for us by the Estate."

"We shall be free to elect only the people we desire; we shall set a standard that newcomers will try and live up to; membership will be a proud honor, jealously guarded, and not merely something thrown in by a builder with a plot of land!"

Mr. Baldwin sat down. From his unclenched palm there fell a piece of paper—hot and damp and twisted. It contained his notes: planned with meticulous care through half a dozen long evenings of labor and he had not used a word of them.

They contained suggestions for altering the barn: plans of the club's activities, carefully modelled to attract both young and old, with a dozen other details. He had planned a business-like, cool-headed speech, and instead he had rained like a soap-box orator.

But they were applauding him—and the applause seemed to go on for a long time; he turned round to find van Doon's little round face in his, and van Doon, who should by now have been his bitter enemy, was smiling.

"Who said you couldn't speak?" said van Doon.

Mr. Baldwin felt bewildered. Were they laughing at him?—was the applause ironical?—was van Doon's remark a crowning insult?—or could it be a generous compliment? He cursed himself for losing his head and forgetting all his best and most carefully reasoned arguments—and yet as the applause ended a murmur arose—a keen, excited murmur from half a dozen impromptu meetings around him.

Vaguely Mr. Baldwin realised that somebody was standing up talking. Mrs. McKinney was telling the meeting that when she and her late husband had tried to found the Archery Club at Wimbledon Park it had been their intention to keep it select and have nobody who was likely to fool about, because bows and arrows were delicate things, and expensive and easily broken and she knew by experience what a lot of damage one stupid person could do.

She thought the best way to avoid this would be to limit the club as Mr. Baldwin suggested because it did not follow that because a man bought a house in Weldon Valley he would understand how to treat the delicate implements of archery.

Mrs. McKinney's speech was opportune because it broke the silence and gave everybody a chance of thinking about what Mr. Baldwin had just said. But it remained for the aristocratic old gentleman in spats to voice what all were thinking and to set the seal upon Mr. Baldwin's triumph.

The old man had said nothing so far. Once he had looked at his wife and gravely nodded; once he had glanced at her and shaken his head with a smile. For the rest he had sat motionless, thoughtfully stroking his moustache. He was slight and very thin; he wore an old-fashioned suit and an old-world tie. His shoulders drooped a little but there was a quiet dignity that compelled attention.

"Colonel Henderson," whispered van Doon into Mr. Baldwin's ear, and Mr. Baldwin was pleased that appearances

had not deceived him. He had hoped all along that the old man might turn out to be a colonel, but spats can be treacherous things and he had feared they might have turned out to be mere decoys round the ankles of a retired grocer.

Van Doon tapped upon the table and the meeting became silent when it saw the old man standing up.

"May I say a word?" began the old man in a gently, cultured voice. "May I tell Mr. van Doon how grateful my wife and I feel towards him for a very happy and stimulating evening? When we came to Weldon Valley we expected to be rather lonely old people. We did not expect an invitation to a meeting such as this. We both admired and respected our chairman's speech: at first we were both ready to support a club managed by the Estate—but after sitting here and listening, and—may I say?—feeling the fine independent spirit of everyone present this evening, I am sure we can have splendid fun if we build up the club on our own—just as Mr. Baldwin has so admirably suggested."

"I say that if necessary we will both support a club built by the Estate because I think it our duty—but if we have our own club—if we have that fine old barn all to ourselves, then I shall take my coat off and mow the grass and wash the cups and do everything in the world for it. Perhaps I am a selfish old snob; a dachard Tory if you like—but I do want the spirit in this room to be kept safe and sound so that it may set a standard for those who follow us."

They applauded Colonel Henderson more for himself than for his words; they applauded him because they all wanted to be like him when they were old.

The two young men at the back were inspired to their feet: they spoke briefly but vigorously. "Our own club or nothing!" was the gist of their remarks, and through a haze of happiness Mr. Baldwin caught sight of Edith, almost bouncing on the sofa—almost slapping the second young man on the back!

Van Doon behaved admirably. If he felt any disappointment he concealed it with completeness that won Mr. Baldwin's heart. He stood up and said that his own proposal was only put forward as an idea to stimulate the meeting to a full expression of views. All that he desired was a first-rate club and his heart and soul would be with whatever the meeting decided upon.

"As chairman I will ask you to decide by a show of hands. Those in favor of our own private club?"

Fourteen hands shot up. The deaf lady and the stout man in pince-nez were the only ones who remained aloof.

"Those in favor of the estate-managed club?"

No hands went up at all: the stout man in pince-nez stared at the ceiling and continued to remain aloof, and the deaf lady was asking her companion what the first lot of hands were all about.

"Carried," said Mr. van Doon amidst enthusiastic applause.

Mr. Forbes Whithead got up and made some keen business-like remarks.

"To vote for a club doesn't mean it's built and furnished," he said. "We've got a long way to go, but I do suggest we try by some means to buy that barn and meadow so that the club will be ours in fact as well as in spirit."

A small executive committee was then formed, consisting of Mr. Baldwin as secretary, Mr. van Doon, Colonel Henderson, Mr. Whithead, the stockbroker, and Mr. Fitzgerald, a young architect, who offered his professional services in an honorary capacity.

Everyone agreed that it was an



admirable committee. It was to start work immediately and report progress in two weeks' time. All present were invited to submit their names for membership without formality and to be elected at the next meeting. All future members were to be proposed and seconded, and carefully considered by the committee before election.

A very complimentary vote of thanks to the chairman was proposed by Mr. Whitbread and passed with acclamation. Mr. van Doon replied that no one in the room was happier than he at the result of the meeting and concluded by inviting the company to adjourn to the dining-room for refreshments.

Mr. Baldwin never forgot the last hour of that evening. He never forgot the gay, bewildering atmosphere of that throbbing, panelled dining-room: the warm amber lights, the smell of coffee and log fire and starchy paste and new hearth-rug and chocolate sponge; the keen babble of voices and bubbling gusts of laughter; the joggling of elbows and the gushing of coffee into saucers—cries of warning, apologies, and more laughter.

There seemed to be hundreds of people crowded there, and all of them appeared to have something to confide to Mr. Baldwin, their new secretary. Five different people came up to register their names as members without delay, and with a rock-bun in one hand and notebook in the other, Mr. Baldwin jotted down their names and addresses, and promised to communicate with them at the earliest possible moment.

Colonel Henderson came up to introduce his wife and ask whether the committee would honor him by meeting in his house for their first meeting on Friday night.

"You made a magnificent speech," said the old man with a hand upon Mr. Baldwin's arm. "It was your speech that did it."

"It was yours that did it," said Mr. Baldwin, but Colonel Henderson shook his head and smiled.

Mr. van Doon, with a large, half-eaten cream bun in his hand and a small piece of cream upon his nose, came up and asked what time tomorrow would suit Mr. Baldwin for an interview with the Estate Manager about the barn and meadow. Mrs. McKinney pushed her way through the crowd and asked Mr. Baldwin what he really felt about archery, and the young architect wanted to know whether Mr. Baldwin would walk down to the barn directly he got home from London tomorrow evening to discuss the alterations.

At one time there were half a dozen people standing round Mr. Baldwin, and he had to slip the rock bun into his pocket to give more freedom to write. Mr. van Doon kept calling out, "Jelly, who says jelly!" and Mrs. van Doon kept going round asking everybody whether the room was too hot for them and whether they were quite sure it wasn't, and whether they would promise faithfully to tell her at once if it was.

The young architect pushed through the crowd with a large whisky and soda and insisted upon Mr. Baldwin drinking it before he exhausted himself any further.

It was past eleven before the first guest said "goodbye" to Mrs. van Doon. It was Mrs. Morrison, the deaf lady, and she asked Mr. Baldwin whether she might make some d'oyleys for putting under the plates at the new club, and Mr. Baldwin thanked her and promised to lay her generous offer before the committee.

Gradually the room emptied and the table reappeared in all its battered glory. It looked as if a bomb had exploded upon it: the sandwiches had

entirely gone, and only a plate of large sausage rolls had been spared intact as a monument to Prudence.

Although the purple jelly now had a large crater in its summit, numerous small pieces of it were visible upon plates pushed furtively on to the window ledge, the sideboard and other secluded places, for it had not been quite sweet enough and had tasted slightly of paraffin.

By mutual accord the committee lingered until the end. They were arranging their first meeting at the Colonel's house when the little dentist popped back from the front door in a large green muffler. He drew Mr. Baldwin aside to tell him that a friend of his was in the wholesale printing line and would no doubt be pleased to prepare all the printed matter of the club at exceptional prices.

Mr. Baldwin thanked him and promised to lay the generous offer before the committee.

He caught sight of Edith peeping into the room to see if he were ready, and he gathered up his papers to go. "Tomorrow night, then, at Colonel Henderson's."

"Eleven o'clock at the barn," reminded the young architect.

"You've got your time cut out now," called the Colonel.

The storm had passed, and Tom and Edith Baldwin walked home through a quiet, starry night. They could still hear van Doon calling out to his departing guests as they opened the green front gates of their home and picked their way through the puddles of the unfinished pathway to the front door. The dining-room was cool and peaceful after the heat and babble of the past hour; the fire glowed faintly beneath a soft grey fur ash as they sat down beside it for a little while before they went to bed.

"Well," said Mr. Baldwin with a laugh. "What d'you think about it?"

"I think it's wonderful," said Edith. "Van Doon seems quite happy. He took it well."

"He was happy directly after that compliment you paid him about people remembering him in a hundred years' time. He didn't mind what happened after that."

Mr. Baldwin pulled on his slippers and smiled. "People won't remember; they never do. But van Doon won't be there to know."

TEN years have passed since that April night, and this final chapter comes more by chance than by design. I had need this autumn to visit some friends in Buckingham and my way from London led along the Edgware Road. I was held up by the traffic beside one of those many quiet roads that join the main thoroughfare at right angles. I glanced up as I waited for the traffic to move on, and the name-plate "Brondesbury Terrace" revived a memory.

I had worked beside Mr. Baldwin for several years in the Temple Insurance Office; I had subscribed my half-crown towards his clock and stood by the wall in the Manager's room when it was presented to him upon the night of his retirement. I had been one of the first visitors to his new house in Weiden Valley, but since then, for over ten years, our ways had parted, and except for an annual Christmas Card I had heard no news of him at all.

The impulse came to swing into Brondesbury Terrace, to drive past old "Gramere" to see what had happened to it, and then break my journey at "Greengates" for a cup of tea. I wriggled my car around the tail-end of a lorry and drove slowly down the road that Mr. Baldwin had lived in for so many years.

Brondesbury Terrace has let the years glide over it with little sign of wear, and the same old houses turn their brown, placid faces towards you as you pass. I began to look for the large notice-board that advertised Mr. Ranken-Dudley's School of Education, but as I drew opposite "Gramere" I saw that the notice-board had disappeared. Mr. Ranken-Dudley has vanished into the noise from whence he came and "Gramere" has settled down once more into the dignity of a private residence.

The front door and railings have been painted a rather disturbing ginger-brown, but the old laurel hedge that Mr. Baldwin worked so hard upon still lingers there in its dusky, chronic baldness. A boy in a green cap came whistling down the steps on his way to afternoon school and a pleasant-looking mother closed the door behind him. The curtains were clean and tidy, and I looked forward to telling Mr. Baldwin that the old house has taken on a new and happy lease of life.

If you have not been to Weiden Valley in the past ten years a visit will surprise you. A vast iron-grey by-pass road sweeps round upon its northern side, missing the old village by a hairsbreadth. "To Weiden 1 mile" brings you to a railway station, far different from the one that Tom and Edith Baldwin knew in the days when "Greengates" was being built.

You can no longer hear a solitary porter yawn through the stillness, for the sleepy little station has been attacked and captured by Metroland: colonised and civilised into producing six train-loads of lively City people a day. The elms no longer creak their joints above the narrow, twisting lane that led to the village: the lane has grown into a broad, curving, concrete avenue upon which mansions have been built.

The old village, with its brown turreted church and elm trees, remains almost as it used to be because it lies in a backwater, but the Bell Inn beside the humped-back bridge has swollen into the Bell Hotel and a delicate operation upon the bridge has broadened its back and removed its hump, so that people in dicky seats of cars no longer come down after the car has hurtled on.

As I drove out of the old village and turned into the road that leads to Weiden Close I came to a far different corner of the modern world from the screeching, concrete-spattered stretch beside the by-pass. Broad white avenues curve away towards the low hills that rim the valley: quiet, sane avenues with well-spaced embowered houses that do not stare rudely into each other's bedrooms. Most of them look politely over each other's shoulders towards the southern sky, and everywhere there is a sense of rest and quiet. Weiden Valley will always be quiet, for it has been given the golden privilege of leading to nowhere.

The Estate Office has packed up and disappeared. It has sold all its land in Weiden Valley and has got its teeth into the naked haunches of a hill three miles away.

Weiden Close remains open and inviolate. It had mellowed and softened, and is slowly gathering to itself the tranquil spirit of a village green. But "Greengates" no longer stands there in solitude. Houses surround it on all sides, but they are well spaced and already secluded amongst their fast-growing evergreens.

The shrubs that hedge the front of "Greengates" are no longer shivering little striplings, frightened of themselves and suspicious of one another. Their sturdy growth has given them confidence. They have made friends



with each other and thrown their arms around each other's shoulders so that the lower windows of the house are hidden from view until you reach the gate.

I could not have called at a better time as far as Mrs. Baldwin was concerned. The season had been kind and her roses were putting up a great show for the lateness of the year. She came to meet me in a business-like blue overall and pulled off a bulky leather glove to shake hands. There was a Committee Meeting at "Greengates" that night, she told me, and her best trees were offering up their choicest blooms to decorate the room.

"Tom's upstairs at work. Come round and see the back garden before we call him down."

"Back garden" is a poor name to describe the little paradise they have made behind the house. The clefts of the stone-flagged path are filled with moss, shy rock flowers speckling it here and there with violet and gold.

A pergola of briar roses spans the garden at the lower end of the lawn, and at either end of the path beneath the rustic archway two small banked-up rockeries have been built. They cleverly conceal the boundaries of the Baldwin territory and give a sense of width and spaciousness.

Upon one side of the lower garden are the vegetables. Upon the other side, beyond a small thicket of currant trees, a corner has been left in its native wildness. In this corner the grass lies rough and wild around the trunk of Mr. Baldwin's elm and the clump of blackberry bushes are as they were upon the first day of the Baldwin's visit.

"We come blackberrying down here with a hooked walking-stick and a jam jar," said Edith. "It's nice to know there's one wild bush in the world that we can go blackberrying around without other people getting there before us and leaving us the green ones."

I gathered that Edith has, by degrees, taken over all the garden except for this wild corner and the lawns. At first the roses alone were hers but she has taken it piece by piece as the work of the Club has steadily increased upon Mr. Baldwin's shoulders.

The Club. Yes the Club was doing wonderfully well but Edith felt very strongly that her husband should have an assistant to relieve him of part of the work.

"He's at it day and night. He attends all the sub-committees and hasn't missed a meeting since the Club was formed. When he had lumbago last spring he insisted upon having a meeting in his bedroom! He likes to keep everything under his hand and know exactly what's happening everywhere."

She was telling me how Mr. Baldwin had offered to resign after his tenth year as Secretary last April, and how the General Meeting had shouted him back to his seat, when she was interrupted by the French windows flying open and Mr. Baldwin himself came hurrying down the path to meet us.

He will be seventy-one next year. His hair is quite white now, but his face is the color of polished oak and his eyes are clearer and keener than ever I saw them in his office days.

He took me upstairs to his bedroom. It can still be called a bedroom, for it looks more like the sleeping quarters of an Adjutant upon Active Service. The bed has been shoved carelessly away into a corner as an irritating necessity that calls for too much valuable time and beneath the window that looks across the open country to the hill crest there stands a large table piled with books and papers.

Open shelves along the walls are lined with Club Minute Books, files of correspondence, reference volumes and

some new books on Gardening and History.

"You must excuse the mess," said Mr. Baldwin. "I do most of my work up here to be out of reach of people who call. I simply have to make it a rule to be 'out' to everybody in the afternoons or I'd never get through any work at all. The Club?—Yes, most of it's the Club."

I began to congratulate him upon the success he had made of it, but he quickly broke in to stop me.

"It's not me! It's team work. We struck it lucky with our original Committee; that's the key to it all. We've got a fellow named Forbes Whithead. He's a stockbroker—a wonderful chap. He took charge of the finances; he raised a loan and fixed up a plan to buy the barn and meadow. He arranged a sinking fund and in three years we pay back the last penny and the Club's ours! Everybody does something. Colonel Henderson runs the garden; he lends his own gardener twice a week and works on it himself like a Trojan. A young architect gave his services and made a magnificent job of the barn."

He went on enthusiastically. "It's just like an old Tudor Hall inside, with big curtains to divide it into separate rooms when we need them. The Club's full up now; a hundred members and a waiting list of seventeen. We've kept half of the membership reserved for young people: we're running a rugby team for the first time this season and of course the cricket and tennis have been going on for several years. Van Doon? Yes—he's still here. He's useful because he does odd jobs other people don't want. But you have to sit on him now and then. If you're too nice to him he gets uppish and rude and if you're rude to him he offers you a chair. You know the sort of man."

I NOTICED a pile of open books on his table, and several sheets of closely written notes. It was pleasant to see again that neat round hand that I knew so well from the ledgers in the office. I asked him whether he was writing a book of his own, and he laughed self-consciously.

"Notes for my next lecture!" he said. "We've had a series each winter for the last five years and they've turned out quite a success. We often get as many as sixty or seventy members to them." He handed me a neat little booklet. "Here's the list for the season."

Oct. 10—"Memories of the North-West Frontier," by Colonel G. S. Henderson, C.M.G.

Nov. 6—"Nature at Night," by Forbes Whithead.

Dec. 3—"Adventures of a Rubber Planter," by Percy van Doon.

Jan. 6—"Cricket in Trinidad," by Major Allan Keeble.

Feb. 7—"Books to read and books to light the fire with," by Rev. Walter Penn.

March 10—"A Civil War Skirmish in Welden Valley," by T. R. Baldwin.

"We encourage members to prepare lectures and submit them to the Lecture sub-Committee. Everybody's had some kind of adventure, or got some kind of interest or hobby worth listening to. I was always rather interested in history."

"I'm making a study of the history of this little corner of the world and it's twice as interesting if you can stand up and talk about what you've discovered. People ask questions and often come round and discuss them afterwards. I began with 'Welden Valley in the Stone Age,' then 'The Romans in Welden Valley.' Last year I did 'What William the Conqueror did with Welden Valley,' and next year it's 'Member of Parliament for Welden.' I've discovered that Welden

was one of the Rotten Boroughs and until the Reform Act stopped it, a farmer and six laborers had the right to elect a Member! I'm hoping to begin an Archaeological Society one day—but it's difficult to find time for everything one wants to do!"

During tea I discovered that Edith's activities were not entirely confined to the house and garden. She is on the Ladies' Committee and she reminded Mr. Baldwin that there would be an insurrection amongst the ladies if they were not given the Club for an extra afternoon a week for their new scheme of House and Garden debates.

Mr. Baldwin threw out his hands in a gesture of helplessness.

"It can't be done, Edith! You know quite well there are only seven days in a week! They begin rehearsing the Christmas play on Wednesday; the juniors want their weekly dances again and with twenty-eight entries for the Ping Pong tournament we shall have to play as many games as we can in the afternoons. You've got three afternoons already!"

"There's Friday," put in Edith.

"Friday's the only day when members who don't want to do anything can sit about in peace. Nice time we shall have if the Committee turns them out for your needlework and cookery lectures!" He reached forward and took his cup of tea. "Still, I'll sound the Committee tonight. I'll see what I can do, but I can't promise anything."

"Which means," said Edith with a wink at me, "that we can have an extra afternoon without the slightest trouble if you say so."

"Rot!" said Mr. Baldwin. "I'm only Secretary!" But Edith only laughed and winked at me again.

The evenings were beginning to draw in, and I wanted to make as much progress as possible along the unfamiliar road before it grew dark. In any case I could not have taken up more of Mr. and Mrs. Baldwin's time, for Mr. Baldwin had to hurry down to the Club to supervise the draw of the Ping Pong tournament and get back for a hasty dinner before the Committee Meeting, and a Mrs. McKluney was coming in to see Mrs. Baldwin to discuss the possibility of having an afternoon a week in the meadow for Archery.

"Try and come over one Saturday and see one of our Rugger games," said Mr. Baldwin. "Young Whithead's Captain: he's the son of old Forbes Whithead and was Captain of his school last year. It'll be a great triumph if we can win a few games in our first season. Here's a fixture card—to save you coming on a Saturday when we're playing away. But you must come in the spring to see the Club at its best: come one evening when the garden's worth seeing and when there's tennis going on and some youngsters practicing cricket at the nets."

They came to the gate to see me off; Edith still in the blue overall she had forgotten to remove for tea, Mr. Baldwin in his grey flannels and white sweater. They waved good-bye as I turned the corner that led me away from Welden Close. I drove slowly through the old village where the falling sun was giving a ruddy glow to the church tower behind the trees.

I drove more quickly along the new road and I skirted the station as a crowd of returning City men and girls came hurrying out towards their new homes in Welden Valley. I just had time to wonder how many of them were members of the Club as the roaring by-pass caught me and swept me away towards the North.

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